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## ELT CONVENTION 2005

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apac-elt convention  
Barcelona\_ march 2nd, 3rd & 4th 2006

This quarterly journal of the Association aims to collect articles based on the year's APAC-ELT Convention, interviews with speakers, different kinds of contributions, book reviews, the presentation of different websites that have caught our attention and that we consider to be of interest to our members, and section concerning materials, among other subjects found in our pages.

This year, the 2005 Convention has brought us a wealth of articles, which has caused us to have to postpone the publication of other equally valuable contributions from teachers eager to inform all of us of the results of their research and to share innovative ideas and proposals. The issue that you are now holding in your hands aims to re-balance this state of affairs and is chockful of non-Convention-related articles. Cristina Mallol and Anna Iñesta discuss theories on how to improve communicative competence. Cristina Mallol explains different theories of intelligence and learning, and then offer readers the chance to visit her website, where she has created activities that put these theories into practice. Anna Iñesta discusses students' beliefs about the L2 learning process, how they can adversely affect their progress, and ways to deconstruct these ideas and help students to gain new ground in their development. Salvador Montaner and Remedios Ruiz present motivating activities for working on listening and reading skills in class, respectively. Salvador Montaner provides ideas and activities for incorporating pop songs into the classroom and exploiting them for a variety of purposes, and he also offers readers the web address for ordering a computer programme for making different kinds of puzzles for class. Remedios Ruiz discusses how she empowered students to be able to pursue their own interests by allowing each one to be able to choose which books they wanted to read for her class. And Imma Piquer places emphasis on the importance of introducing the youngest learners to foreign languages. She discusses the theoretical reasons that support this, and she provides ideas on the practical aspects of these kinds of programmes. There is also an article stemming from the 2005 Convention; that by María José Sánchez on her workshop, "Qualifying Grammar", in which she demonstrated ways of dealing with the teaching of grammar productively.

Continuing with our line of webquests and weblogs, initiated several issues ago, we offer the valuable contributions of Joanna Angrill. She offers a very informative and practical discussion of what webquests and weblogs (or blogs) are, and how a teacher can use them to great use in the classroom. Also, in our desire to offer more chances for reflecting on language learning, we have included a roundtable which took place during the 10th Conference on Foreign Languages, held in Lleida in March 2003, and which we published exceptionally in Catalan.

Once more, we would like to emphasise the importance of considering this journal as a vehicle of communication among all our members. Therefore, we would appreciate it if you sent in suggestions for improving it, in terms of sections offered as well as content. And, of course, apart from suggestions, we look forward to receiving and publishing your contributions in terms of articles, book reviews, interesting materials, and other information that would like to bring to the attention of your fellow teachers in Catalonia. Teachers who are in the classroom every day are the best sources of ideas, experiences and innovations for improving students' learning.

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Dear colleagues,

APAC is a collective enterprise. But, sometimes it is necessary to single out an individual to do him justice. In our joint venture, it is only fair to distinguish the role played by our colleague, Ramón Ribé, who was the energy –and inspiration- behind the setting up of our association in the early eighties. There was, indeed, a group of founding “fathers” and “mothers” in those years of great enthusiasm about what we used to call “escola catalana”, and it is a fact that, even in APAC’s early stages, Ramon was not by himself. Yet, when we got him elected as our first President, the choice was only natural. I imagine you begin to wonder why all this fuss about Professor Ribé. Easy: he is now retiring from his post in the Department of English Studies at the Universitat de Barcelona, and I want to make sure we are all reminded of Ramon’s crucial and generous efforts devoted to the very existence of our association. For Ramon, this was a natural consequence of his life-long dedication to teaching. In his case, it has never been just a job but a wholehearted devotion to the essential values of pedagogy and general education. In his many and outstanding contributions to the teaching of English as a foreign language, there are always the imprints of an educator. Ramon: we thank you very much for everything, but let me warn you that knowing you have afforded yourself some free time, we at APAC expect to get a fair share of it for our own benefit.

By now, you must have accessed various announcements concerning APAC’s 2006 Convention from our website. Everything is being prepared at Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona to host a new edition of what everyone in the trade considers the biggest of its kind in Spain. We will be looking at “use, abuse and overuse in TFEL”, and we have gathered many distinguished scholars to discuss relevant issues in the field and have been able to select workshops from a great number of practitioners of the art, who offer different perspectives from different teaching situations. Alongside plenary sessions, workshops, presentations and roundtables, you’ll have the chance to browse through the latest contributions in ELT materials, since we expect the largest participation ever in the exhibition hall we provide for publishing houses. And I am proud to announce that the opening lecture of the Convention will be given by Irish writer, Colm Tóibín. Since his days in Barcelona as a teacher of EFL in the Dublin School during the turbulent period of Franco’s death and the years of change from dictatorship to democracy, the author of “The South”, “Homage to Barcelona” or the recent “The Master” has become a prominent voice in English literature. If we live between two languages, Colm Tóibín has managed to live between two cities and made Dublin and Barcelona both places of residence and literary *topos*. His lecture is appropriately called “A Tale of Two Cities”, and to miss it should be considered a case of negligence.

We are all here looking forward to meeting friends and colleagues in what is a great chance to discuss and share, to feel the excitement of the new but also the solace of the old. Our convention –like big family reunions- is very much about big news and old stories. We deal with education, and this is precisely why we get together: to welcome innovation and profit from tradition... And just one last word: if you are also looking forward to those first days in March, why don’t you persuade a colleague to join us? The *happy few* are alright, but the happy *many* always make a better picture.

So long!

**Miquel Berga**  
Apac President

## Deconstructing Students' Conceptions about EFL Learning

THE MAJORITY OF ESL STUDENTS IN OUR COUNTRY SEEM TO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO MOVE BEYOND AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF COMPETENCE IN ITS USE. FROM A SOCIO-COGNITIVE APPROACH WITHIN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, RESEARCH INTO THE IMPACT OF STUDENTS' IMPLICIT BELIEFS ABOUT L2 LEARNING ON THEIR LEARNING PROCESS APPEARS AS A POTENTIALLY REVEALING LINE OF RESEARCH INTO THIS MATTER. THIS ARTICLE WILL MOVE FROM THEORY-GROUNDED RESEARCH TO INTRODUCE PRACTICAL METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR ESL PRACTITIONERS TO DECONSTRUCT THOSE CONCEPTIONS WHICH MAY BLOCK STUDENTS' ENGAGING IN EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESSES AND FAVOR THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF MORE COMPLEX VIEWS OF WHAT LANGUAGE LEARNING ENTAILS.

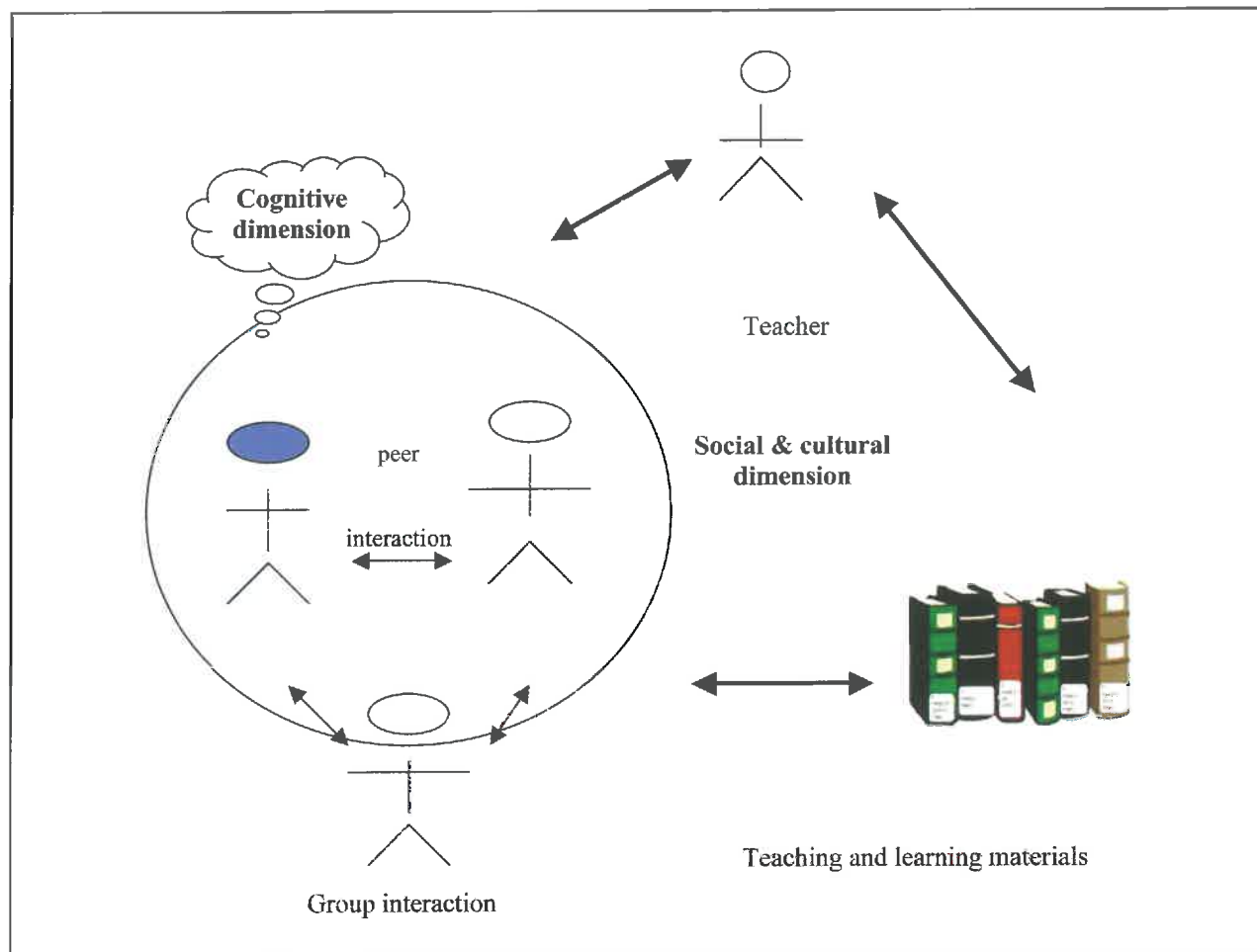
by Anna Iñesta

The assumption that underlies this paper is that previous linguistic knowledge is not the only thing we should pay attention to when analysing our students' starting point in the first weeks of class. Their conceptions about EFL learning and about themselves as EFL learners (self-concept) are also key as they may interfere and even block their learning process. This is specially so when such conceptions relate to simplified views of what language use entails and when students portray themselves as unable to take the learning process into their own hands. We should therefore design tasks which favor students' co-construction of more complex conceptions about language learning and language use at the same time as their controlled resolution of tasks fosters a positive self-concept as EFL learners. Such a reconstruction must start with students' gaining consciousness of their own implicit beliefs and must have training students to become strategic learners as a final objective. Case analysis will be presented as a methodological tool we can use to favor students' awareness of their own implicit beliefs and as part of the instructional

scaffolding whereby teachers actualize their mediating role in their students' learning process, and so it can be considered a type of instructional help.

Most of us EFL teachers are familiar with linguistics and applied linguistics as the main approaches for shedding light on what happens in the language classroom. However, educational psychology has of late become a fruitful resource for research on language teaching (see for example Long and Robinson, 2003; Doughty and Williams, 2003). In the late seventies and early eighties, information processing, with Anderson as one of its most relevant theorists, forwarded the cognitive approach as an alternative theory of knowledge acquisition to that advocated by the behaviorist school. Nowadays, the rather "dry" assumptions of that approach have developed to include the social dimension. Two main lines of enquiry may be distinguished: the sociocultural and the sociocognitive approaches. The former approach in Spain finds Cesar Coll ("father" of the Spanish Educational Reform which materialized in the LOGSE) as one of its main proponents, while Carles Monereo (1997),

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and Juan Ignacio Pozo (1996) are two of the most prolific authors writing from the sociocognitive approach.

The sociocognitive approach understands the classroom as a dynamic space basically characterized by the classical interactive triangle involving the students, the teaching and learning materials, and the teacher. From this perspective teaching and learning tasks should be designed to make sure such interaction somehow modifies the students' behavior. This approach considers tasks as the main unit of analysis of students' performance and claims that the modification of students' task resolution (from automatic to strategic) will ultimately help them construct more complex representations of what language use entails. However, the particularities of such a modification are determined by the individual's interpretation of what happens around him/her, with such interpretations resulting in what is known as "representations". Students' interpretations of their learning experiences in the classroom develop into representations regarding the area of knowledge, the different types of tasks,

and themselves as students of that area of knowledge (self-concept).

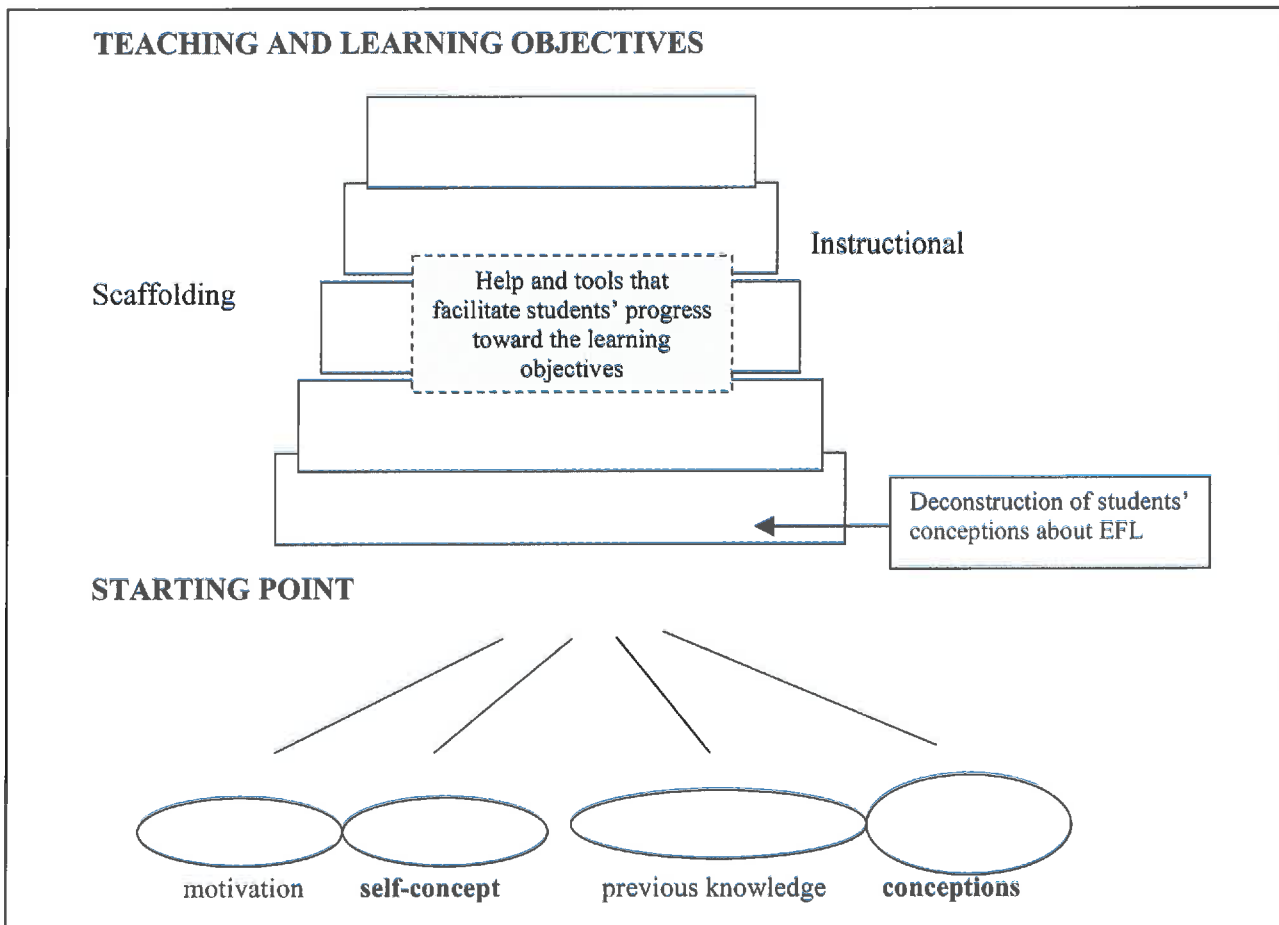
Two different types of representations may be distinguished, depending on whether they are stored in long-term memory or called on by working memory. "Schemata", on the one hand, are stored in long-term memory, which is basically a container where information is stored. Although susceptible to modification, this type of representation is quite permanent and results from the similar interpretation of accumulated experiences. On the other hand, working memory can be conceptualized as a sort of control panel responsible for the on-line management of the cognitive resources which are necessary to solve every particular task. Every time we are confronted with the resolution of a particular kind of task, we construct what is called a "situational model", that is, a representation of the task which is transient and heavily dependent on the specific learning situation. Now, within schemata we can distinguish between those representations which are derived from formal interpretations of scientific knowledge and those which result from informal or "common sense" interpretations of both "daily" informal knowledge and scientific knowledge. Such

<i>Conceptions = Implicit theories</i>	<i>Scientific / School knowledge</i>
Beliefs (+ emotional load)	Knowledge
Not accessible to consciousness (= difficult to verbalize)	Accessible to consciousness since they result from explicit explanation
Incidental learning	Planned instruction
Both informal and formal contexts	School / university contexts
Source: "common sense"	Source: "science"
Resistant to change	Difficult to integrate if no bridge is built to move from implicit theories

informal theories are what we refer to when we speak of conceptions, also called implicit beliefs by some authors (e.g. Rodrigo et al, 1993). The table below characterizes conceptions as compared to those representations which derive from formal interpretations of scientific knowledge.

The preliminary analysis of the data obtained in a study conducted with undergraduate students in Barcelona allows us to provide some examples of

the students' implicit theories or conceptions about EFL learning. For example, the students referred to EFL learning comparing it with the learning process of their L1, mentioning immersion and age as factors determining the impossibility of their learning English efficiently. Although, as we said, implicit theories are normally not verbalized, they take a declarative form, so they can be expressed as a proposition. Thus, the common implicit theory would say something similar to: "Learning English is



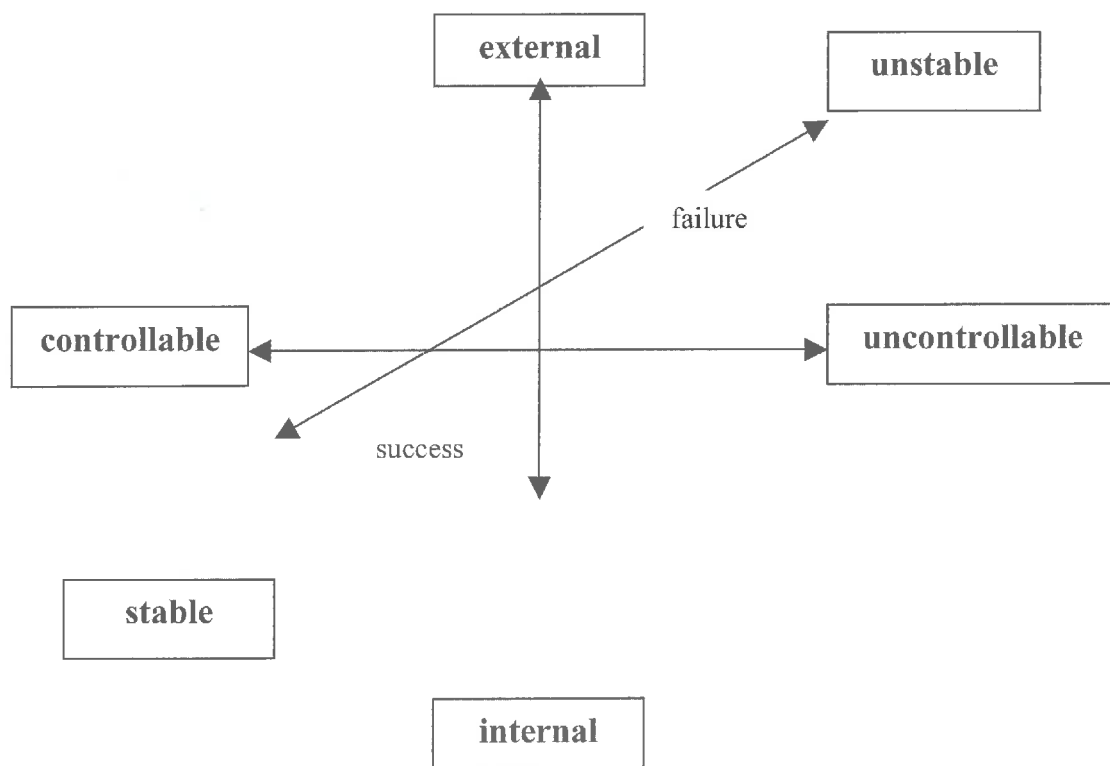
not in my hands. However hard I try I will never learn it efficiently." When asked about the learning process per se, students unanimously referred to their feeling uncomfortable with the perception of difficulties when using English, that is, with the experience of effort. The conception behind such a perception may be phrased thus: "If I have to think before saying/writing something it means I'm not learning. Now, if we understand the classroom as a space where we teachers must guide students from their starting point to the teaching and learning objectives set within the zone of proximal development, then I will suggest that we analyze their starting point not only in terms of linguistic knowledge and motivation but also in terms of students' conceptions and self-concept. Moving from here, then, deconstructing students' misguided conceptions about EFL learning and about themselves as students must be seen as a first step in the instructional scaffolding we should build so as to allow them to increasingly solve more complex tasks than those they could have solved on their own.

We have already seen what conceptions are. Now, causal attribution patterns can be used as part of the initial diagnosis to characterize our students' profile as far as self-concept is concerned. The first thing we should do is ask our students to solve a

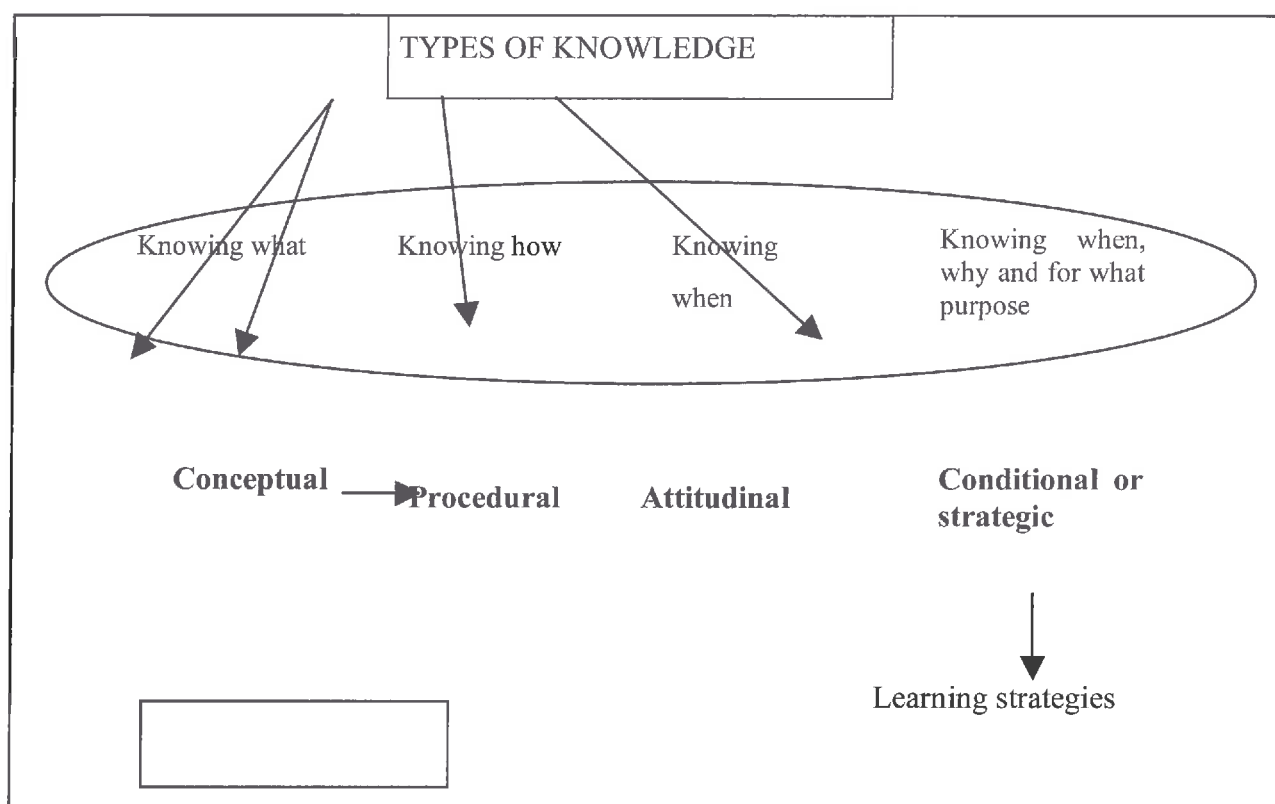
challenging task. Once they have finished and we have analyzed their performance, we should ask them whether they had any difficulties solving it and what they attribute those difficulties to. If, for example, one student attributes her success to internal, controllable and stable causes (e.g. "I did well because I am good at making conceptual maps from texts") and her failure to external, unstable and uncontrollable causes (e.g. "I had problems because I was tired / had previously done an exam"), then that student's profile and self-concept is positive.

However, if another student attributes her success to external, unstable and uncontrollable causes (e.g. "I did well because the text was easier compared with other days") and failure to internal and stable causes (e.g. "I had problems because I simply cannot speak!!!") then this student's poor self-concept may interfere in her learning process.

Up to now we have seen the type of conceptions which may interfere in the students' language learning process. If we are to deconstruct students' conceptions, what type of representations should we help students internalize? I would suggest that we



Based on Pozo, J.I. (1996)



help our students understand language use as a problem-solving activity which requires effective decision-making to be solved adequately. Effective decision-making, in turn, requires the internalization of a strategic approach to task resolution.

From a sociocognitive approach, then, language learning is a skill acquisition process which has strategic language use as its main objective. Thus, strategic or conditional knowledge must be incorporated into the foreign language classroom as a way to foster autonomous decision-making behavior in our students. This is intended to help students gain control over their own performance by providing them with tools to effectively assess the degree of adjustment of their solving behavior to the task demand. At the same time, such self-regulation will foster positive self-concept profiles when students become aware that success in task resolution is in their own hands. Strategic task resolution involves:

*Before:* being capable of studying the conditions of the task, determine its most prominent ones, choose the best (conceptual or procedural) knowledge to use from a range of possibilities at our disposal,

*During:* regulate the resolution process, and

*Afterwards:* assess the effectiveness of our work

As we said, strategic task resolution is designed to ultimately lead to strategic language use. However, before students can start solving tasks strategically, they must be led to the understanding that strategic task resolution lends better results than automatic task resolution in those (open) tasks requiring some kind of decision-making. The first step of this process is to help students realize the way in which they usually approach task resolution and case analysis can be very useful. However we must be careful to design the case analysis activity focusing on a particular kind of learning activity (reading comprehension of a text on the developments in the paper production industry, for example), and using a task students have previously worked on. Once we have chosen the learning task we want to take as a basis, we need to produce a cartoon where what three different imaginary students have done to solve the task becomes visible. Obviously, one of the students should embody the strategic approach to task resolution, another one should show a completely automatic approach (that is, s/he will do as s/he always does, without paying attention to the different task conditions) and the last one should impersonate the unmotivated student whose only objective is to avoid having to work at all. The slides should look something like this:



**Before reading**

Read the text and think about what the environmentalists' arguments would be and how the businessmen would try to counter them

The teacher tells us that when we read we must read it once and then read it again more closely, underlining the most important ideas. Easy!

We must find arguments for and against the process described in the article. Perhaps the argument will not appear explicitly in the text. I will read and identify the arguments of both sides, organizing them in two columns

What a pain! I'm sure I will not understand anything and won't say what she wants me to say! Well, let's see if I can get something...



Student A



Student B



Student C

You should prepare as many slides as you need to show the whole task resolution process, that is, you should prepare at least three of them. This is how the while reading slide should look like.

**While reading**

I have read it once and now I will underline [he underlines] What does "myriad" mean? I'm going to check up with the dictionary...

Around the year 105 the paper production technique was invented" Chinese people are incredible, I think they invented gunpowder as well. I don't know what "myriad" means but it doesn't look like an argument. If I have time enough I will look it up in the dictionary...

"Myri-what?" The teacher didn't explain this in class. I hope she doesn't ask me. Myriad, myriad, myriad, now I've learned it!



Student A




Student B




Student C

Finally, the last slide should show the students' assessment of the whole process:


**After reading**



Student A



Student B



Student C

Based on Monereo (1997)

These slides should be used as springboards for an in-class discussion where students would be asked to tell which of the students they identify most with. Their answers to such a question can be of help for us to identify their approach to the resolution of reading comprehension tasks. From that point onwards, the discussion should lead students to realize that student B's way of working on the task is the most strategic one since she is the one to provide an answer adjusted to the task demand. Student A, on the other hand, impersonates the self-confident student who believes he knows the way in which every task is solved because this is how he always performs, his objective being to do exactly what he thinks the teacher will like. Finally, student C shows a clear lack of confidence when

confronted with the task and tries to avoid being asked about the task resolution.

Once the students have been made to control the suitability of their actions before, during, and after having worked on any activity, we can start presenting them with activities which promote strategic task resolution involving a specific set of language features. Indeed, not all activities require such an approach; some of them (fill in the gaps exercises for example) just require students to minimally adapt a lexical or grammatical structure to adjust to simplified communicative contexts. The following framework can be used to analyze or design activities which present the students with different degrees of challenge or openness and which, in turn, favor their strategic task resolution accordingly.



# IPA Productions

Repeated exposure to tasks which require complex evaluation of the learning situation and objectives can promote the complexification of students' simplified conceptions about language use as involved in the resolution of a specific task. If tasks are selected responding to communicative relevance criteria in accordance to learners' needs, we will be quite accurately promoting students form-meaning-use mapping (Doughty, 2003). At the same time, fostering a reflective approach to language use will promote students getting closer to target-like language use behavior.

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Manel Piñeiro, CEIP Sant Julià, L'Arboç, 4-Mar-05

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## Hotel Hamlet and Mosaic Media

WE ARE LIVING IN A SOCIETY WHERE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY MANY TYPES OF MEDIA: FILM, NEWSPAPERS, THE WORLD WIDE WEB... THESE DAYS MILLIONS OF PEOPLE REGULARLY LOG ON TO THE INTERNET, AND AS A RESULT, THEY ARE BEING EXPOSED TO A NON-LINEAR WAY OF WORKING AND THINKING. GRAEME REID EXPLAINS AND OUTLINES AN ONLINE PROJECT, HOTEL HAMLET, FOR EFL LEARNERS, WHICH CAPITALISES ON THIS.

by Graeme Reid

### Mosaic media

It has been suggested that we are living in an age of 'mosaic' communications media. Our broadsheet newspapers have a variety of headlines and articles strategically placed together on their front pages. Films are packed full of what seem like unconnected shots building up to a scene that we intuitively know will end up being connected. Consider how we use the remote control of the television set, 'zapping' from channel to channel endlessly. The internet finds itself at the forefront of 21st-century thinking as it 'presents us with the spatial mosaic of the newspaper, the temporal mosaic of film and the participatory mosaic of the remote control'.\*

### What is non-linear narrative?

A traditional narrative is a story or plot with a beginning, middle and end. We proceed through the text in a linear, pre-determined manner moving from page to page, chapter to chapter, towards an end where the plot is finally resolved. But put a story on the Internet, and there can be various portals or pages where you can start reading. Readers then navigate their own path around the story, experiencing the action in a unique order.

As we will see in Hotel Hamlet ([www.streamadelica.com/narratives/hotelhamlet/](http://www.streamadelica.com/narratives/hotelhamlet/)), a non-linear narrative project can help to create an environment where students can learn from each other and take

more control of their learning by choosing their own content. By following the walkthrough below you should be able to produce something similar to Hotel Hamlet with your students.

### PROJECT: HOTEL HAMLET

#### Aim

Students write and build a collaborative story using the language they know and learn in each class. Students work in groups of two or three, practising vocabulary and grammar, and drawing on their own experiences and imagination.

#### Tools

This project is intended as a Web site made of a collection of interlinking student Web pages. If you do not have the technical abilities to produce Web pages, it is possible to link the stories on a wall, connecting the various parts using pieces of string or pencil lines.

#### Level

This activity works better with students at pre-intermediate level and above, but I have had elementary students who managed to start by describing the appearance of their characters and their physical surroundings and slowly add to their stories as they progressed through the term.

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### Time frame

The project takes place over a number of weeks; the minimum is five weeks, but it can easily be spread out over a term.

### Preparation

Discuss with your class where people can stay, focusing on different types of hotels and the different kinds of people who stay in them, from businessmen to travellers (the advantage of starting your story in a hotel is that whether your students are from Thailand or Mozambique, their characters will not seem out of place in a hotel).

### Introduction

If you have access to the Internet, get your students to go to the Hotel Hamlet home page at [www.streamadelica.com/narratives/hotelhamlet/](http://www.streamadelica.com/narratives/hotelhamlet/). Let them browse around the hotel, meeting the guests and answering the questions below. This will introduce them to the non-linear narrative concept and help them prepare for producing a similar project of their own.

Who is the managing director of a small company?  
Who is sitting in an armchair?  
Which one of the guests is Portuguese?  
Where is James going and why?  
Who is wearing black sunglasses?

### Week one

#### *Describing people and places*

In this first stage of the project, learners create a character who is staying in the hotel. You can do this part on paper or using a word processor.

They will need to describe a character's appearance and personality, and provide some background information. Tell your learners the following:

Your character is in a hotel room planning to go on a trip somewhere. Picture where your character is, where he or she is going, and why.

Close your eyes and listen to the soundscape from the Hotel Hamlet Web site (or any instrumental piece of music). This will help to stimulate the imaginations of your learners.

Decide on the following for your character: name and job; nationality; age; face and body; height and build; eyes; hair; clothes; personality; intellectual ability; attitude towards life; habits.

**Possible language areas:** prepositions of place, cities, countries, describing places and people.

### Week two

#### *Developing your story*

Learners read the character descriptions they all created in week one, and see if they can associate their own character with any of the other characters in the hotel. Working individually, they then choose another learner's character and develop it further. This can include more about their personality and appearance and background as well as more on where they are going and why.

**Possible language areas:** past tenses, future plans, describing people, modes of transport.

### Week three

#### *Using and building links*

The first task for learners this week is to re-visit the newly-created hotel and find out about the characters created and developed by other members of the group (you may want to prepare a task for them such as a 'Find someone who...' or something similar).

Learners then try to bring together a few of the characters using hyperlinks (or, in the low-tech option, by connecting the different characters on a wall).

At the same time, tell them that the characters' time at the hotel is coming to an end and that all the characters are going to check out. Learners must think of a reason to bring their character's time at the hotel to a logical close.

**Possible language areas:** expressions of time, conjunctions, past tenses, future plans.

### Week four

#### *Retracing footsteps*

Again, give your learners time to catch up with what has been happening at the hotel by reading about the progress of the other characters.

Tell them that this week there is a slight twist in the tale. The characters must go back to Hotel Hamlet! Each learner chooses a character and decides their reason for going back (perhaps something they forgot, perhaps something more sinister such as a 'skeleton in the cupboard' scenario). They must then create a new page describing why the character is returning, their means of transport, the journey, and so on.

**Week five**

*To close or not to close?*

Again, give your class a chance to read about the latest developments with the characters in the hotel.

Tell them that this week they have a big decision to make. The guests have now arrived back to the hotel and they must choose whether to bring the stories to an end or to leave them open forever. The choice is theirs; it is possible to leave some of them open and close some of them, but they must decide.

**Final comments**

Non-linear narrative offers students a new and fresh opportunity for creative expression and an excellent way to put the language they learn in class into

practice. Students draw on their own language and from the classroom to write and build a story collaboratively with their classmates. Weaker students can be paired with stronger members of the group to produce meaningful material that all the students feel a part of, with students of different levels writing only what they feel comfortable with producing (and, indeed, are able to produce).

There is no pressure to end a story, as non-linear narratives are not fixed and continue to grow in much the same way as a soap opera continues from day to day. In these narratives the product is not always the most exciting literary piece. However, the learning processes that the students go through are generally more important than the product.

**Resources**

**Trace Online Writing Community:** The starting place for online narrative resources (<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/>).

**253 – Geoff Ryman:** The first non-linear online novel by writer Geoff Ryman ([www.ryman-novel.com](http://www.ryman-novel.com)).

**Hotel Hamlet:** An interactive non-linear narrative created by EFL students in the UK ([www.streamadelica.com/narratives/hotelhamlet](http://www.streamadelica.com/narratives/hotelhamlet)).

**Indian Moon:** Another similar writing project done in India in 2002 ([www.streamadelica.com/narratives/moon/index.htm](http://www.streamadelica.com/narratives/moon/index.htm)).

**WIND STAR**  
WIND STAR, departament d'Idiomes de ROSA DELS YENTS  
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## Visualising grammar: Towards an integrated approach

A MASTERY OF GRAMMAR IS, NO DOUBT, NECESSARY TO BE ABLE TO EXPRESS OUR IDEAS IN A CLEAR AND COHERENT WAY. OUR STUDENTS STUDY GRAMMAR YEAR AFTER YEAR AND MANY STILL MAKE THE SAME BASIC MISTAKES WHEN THEY TRY TO PUT INTO PRACTICE THE RULES THEY HAVE READ AND PRACTISED TIME AND AGAIN. WHY ARE GRAMMAR RULES SO OFTEN AND SO QUICKLY FORGOTTEN?

by María José Sánchez Carrasco

Teaching grammar is usually considered a necessary repetitive drudgery for which more progressive approaches are not taken into account. But it does not have to be this way.

It is well known that our brains are divided into two hemispheres, each of them housing different areas of knowledge and different skills. The left side of the brain is related to abstract thinking, to linear and sequential processing of data, to plans and structures, whereas the right side is related to intuition, associations, holistic processes, images, and emotions.

It is also well known (and it has been widely researched in the last decades) how most of us have a different balance of the abilities housed in each of the sides, and how that influences the way we learn. In figure 1 below, we can see two different learner profiles according to whether the left or the right hemispheres of the brain are dominant.

Left Dominant	Right dominant
Intellectual	Intuitive
Remembers names	Remembers faces
Responds to verbal instructions and explanations	Responds to illustrated or symbolic explanations
Experiments systematically with control	Experiments randomly and with less restraint
Objective domain (reason)	Subjective domain (emotion)
Planned and structured	Fluid and spontaneous
Reliance on language in thinking and remembering	Reliance on images in thinking and remembering
Prefers talking and writing	Prefers drawing and manipulating objects
Not good at interpreting body language	Good at interpreting body language
Conscious Learner (memorized)	Unconscious Learner (experiential)
Linear and Sequential Processing	Associative processing

Figure 1: Learner Profiles

MARÍA JOSÉ SÁNCHEZ IS AN ENGLISH TEACHER AND DEPARTMENT CHAIR AT IES ANTONIO MACHADO IN ALCALÁ DE HENARES. SHE IS A TEACHER TRAINER IN ENGLISH AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES APPLIED TO EDUCATION, AS IS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSIDAD ALCALÁ DE HENARES. SHE HAS BROAD EXPERIENCE AS A PEDAGOGICAL CONSULTANT FOR TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS. SHE IS CURRENTLY THE CONSULTANT FOR GRAMMAR IN VIEW, A VISUAL GRAMMAR PUBLISHED BY MCGRAW-HILL.

Try to mark the features which best describe the way you learn. The chances are that, though one of the two sides will be predominant for you, you will end up with marks on both columns since most people have a balance of the abilities housed in the two hemispheres, and successful learners manage to “build up bridges” anchored on both sides of the brain which allow them to expand and reinforce their knowledge.


Yet, traditionally grammar has been taught taking basically only the left side of the brain into account, in a linear and sequential way, through written rules and lots of examples and explanations, leaving a lot of abilities, mainly residing on the right side of the brain, untapped. This approach which disregards the use of images, which does not take into account the affective aspects related to the learning processes, which looks at the rules of grammar in a dissecting way, as if they did not belong into a wider context, is really wasting a lot of opportunities for learning success.

**WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU REMEMBER**

*Grammar in View* has been written taking into account the strength of images, their evocative power, the importance of making connections between separate points, of integrating the learned rules into meaningful, wider contexts; in other words, stimulating the right side of the brain as well as the left one. Because the more anchored on both sides of the brain the learning activities are, the more chances the grammar rules will have to be remembered by all types of students.

The following figures will show some of the features which make *Grammar in View* a new, more holistic and integrated approach to the learning of grammar at beginner, intermediate and advanced level.

**[2.5] Questions with *there* + *to be***



- Is there a big hotel near the lake?  
- No, there isn't.

Figure 2

Evocative photos help associate the new rules to meaningful images.



Figure 3

Clear, simple and well laid-out explanations help systematise knowledge and reinforce symbolic explanations through a positive visual impact.

**GO** 4.6 (Verbs not used in the Present Continuous)

Figure 4

Cross references facilitate associations which widen and thicken the mental map creating new links between related concepts.

**SECTION 2 TO BE: IT, THERE AND THE SIMPLE PAST OF TO BE.**

[2.1] *It to talk about the weather*

Who wants to talk about the weather?  
It's 90 degrees Fahrenheit/32 degrees centigrade.

Questions	Answers
What's the weather like today?	It's sunny. It's hot. It's cold. It's rainy. It's windy. It's not cold.
What's the temperature today?	It's 90 degrees Fahrenheit/32 degrees centigrade.

It's hot. It's sunny.

Always adjectives related to weather are formed by adding 'it to the stem.  
E.g. cloud → cloudy, sunny → sunny, etc.

**GO** 1.4 (Subject pronoun + Simple Present of to be)

Figure 5

Explanations in L1 for beginners, comparison and contrast with L1 help avoid interference and they build up on students' previous knowledge.



Figure 6

Controlled step by step practice helps integrate new knowledge into existing one and provides adequate repetition for rules and vocabulary to sink in.



Figure 7

Demanding activities which involve several skills (e.g. reading tables and transferring information from table to text) in a context help anchor new knowledge

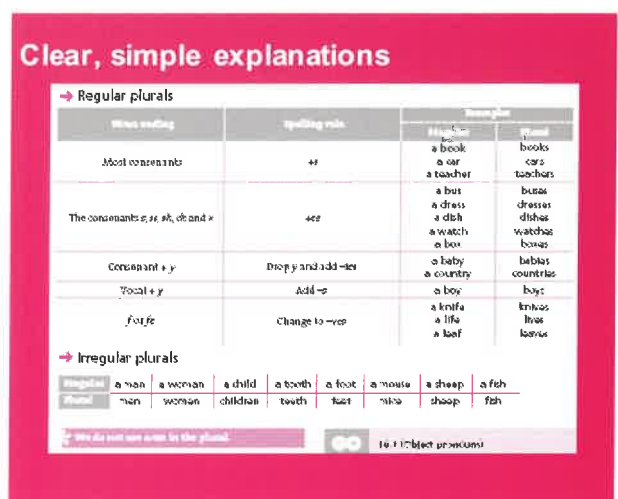


Figure 8

Clearly flagged comments to highlight key concepts or typical mistakes help build up a network of essential information related to the student's previous knowledge.



Figure 9

Personalising the activities bring them within the students' immediate experience and appeal to their emotions.

**Controlled step-by-step practice**

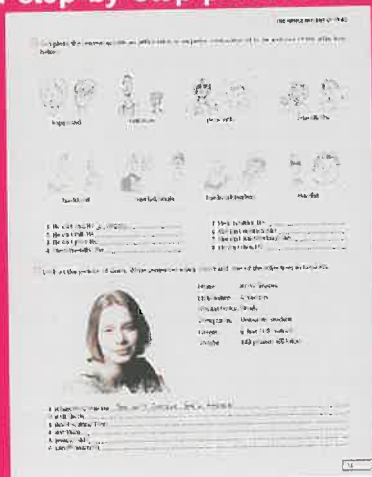


Figure 10

Using what has been previously learnt in a wider, meaningful and communicative context takes the learning of rules and vocabulary beyond the sentence level.

Guided writing exercises in level 2 cover a variety of text types and also take the learning of grammar and vocabulary beyond the sentence level always in communicative contexts.

Besides the grammar books there are other components which make *Grammar in View* an attractive and complete alternative to learn grammar in an autonomous way:

**Clearly flagged comments to highlight key concepts or typical mistakes**

Do not confuse who's and whose.  
Who's - who is.  
Whose - who owns something.

Figure 12

**WRITING** Describe a future city

Write a paragraph about the city of the future.

**Step 1** Ask and answer questions about the city of the future. Write the answers in your notebook. This information may help you.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 What kind of buildings will it have?         | 7 Will people live and work in the same city?  |
| 2 What kind of transportation will people use? | 8 Will there be shops?                         |
| 3 What kind of weather will it have?           | 9 Will people go to restaurants?               |
| 4 What kind of places for sports will it have? | 10 Will people go to the cinema?               |
| 5 How will they control crime?                 | 11 How clean will the city be?                 |
| 6 Will there be animals?                       | 12 What kind of people will live in this city? |

**Step 2** Rewrite your answers in a paragraph form. Write a title in a few words, e.g.: "The City of the Future".

The City of the Future  
In the city of the future, all of the buildings will be underground. People will...

**Step 3** Evaluate your paragraph.

**Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Did you indent the first line?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did you give your paragraph a title?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did you put the title in the middle of the page?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did you capitalise the title correctly?

**Step 4** Edit your work. Correct spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and grammar.

**Step 5** Write your final copy.

Figure 11

The Exam Guides for KET, PET and FCE follow the content studied in the corresponding sections of the Self-Study Guide. The contents and format mirror those found in the Cambridge exams. Answer Key FREE with the Self-Study Guide.


The Online Learning Centre (OLC)

Each topic covered in the Self-Study Guide has interactive *reading* and *listening* activities on the OLC. They are complete with transcripts (for the listenings) and audio (for the readings as well). There are also Timed Quizzes with complete feedback. "Hints" provide students with strategies to do the activities.

To sum up: **Grammar in View** is a self-study grammar course which makes extensive use of visual elements and contains exercises that explicitly stimulate the right part of the brain which works mainly with images, intuitions, associations and emotions. It also has many controlled, planned and structured activities which are integrated in more general communicative tasks.

Personalised activities bring them within the student's immediate experience

22 Match the questions and answers.



**QUESTIONS**

- 1 When were your grandparents married?
- 2 How old was your grandfather?
- 3 What was your grandfather?
- 4 How old was your grandmother?
- 5 Where was the wedding?
- 6 Was it a big wedding?

**ANSWERS**

- a He was a bank manager.
- b It was in Cambridge.
- c In 1932.
- d He was 30 years old.
- e Yes it was.
- f She was 22.

23 Answer these questions about yourself.

- 1 Where were you born?
- 2 When was your last birthday?
- 3 Where were you on your birthday?
- 4 How old were you three years ago?

Figure 13

The Exercise Books contain hundreds of activities for all the points covered in the Self-Study Guide. There are more photos, illustrations and readings. At the end of each section there is a Self-Test to help boost students' confidence a section on error analysis and an Answer Key .



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# WEBQUESTS & BLOGS: web-based tools for EFL teaching

WEBQUESTS AND WEBLOGS ARE LEARNER MOTIVATIONAL WEB-BASED TEACHING METHODOLOGIES THAT ARE YET TO BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION IN SPAIN. THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF WEBQUESTS, TAKING THE FORM OF MYSTERY TASKS, RETELLING OF A SITUATION, PROBLEM SOLVING, JUDGEMENT DECISIONS, ETC. THE PROCESS OF DESIGNING A WEBQUEST IS A THOUGHTFUL ENDEAVOUR THAT DOES NOT REQUIRE MUCH COMPUTING SKILLS AS NUMEROUS TEMPLATES ARE PROVIDED. WEBLOGS ARE ONLINE JOURNALS THAT MAY TAKE MANY FORMS AND BE USEFUL FOR EITHER STUDENTS, TEACHERS OR GENERAL INTRA OR INTER DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION. SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF EACH ARE PRESENTED.

by Joana Angrill Farreny

## 1. Introduction

The educational system establishes, in a legal and curricular framework, a teaching model that intends to adapt teaching to the social needs, in order words, a teaching pattern that caters for a diversity of learners. To this end, different measures have been taken so far mainly involving the distribution of the contents and learners. The curriculum proposes some didactic guidelines as regards EFL teaching. In a student-centred teaching context, tasks should enhance progressive learning autonomy of students while fostering cooperative work.

During the last centuries teaching has not changed as much as our lives have. Were a 19th century citizen to attend a lesson at school nowadays, he or she would see not much difference from the way they were taught: a teacher in a classroom making use of a blackboard, some chalk, a book and, in the best of cases, a TV. It is true that computers are somehow a recent technological device that teachers are still reluctant to take advantage of. Many teachers think of internet as too vast a resource for them to be able to cope with. Indeed, it is under-

standable that a teacher questions the educational benefit of such a chaotic instrument that only seems to offer useless and irrelevant resources to a set of aimless students surfing on the net.

ICT are part of our daily activities to a greater or lesser extent. The technological revolution has implanted a new battery of educational tools –CD-Roms, new software and the most valuable, the World Wide Web- that yet have to be exploited by many educators, who need to be continuously trained to keep up with the latest technological advances. The speed of these advances is increasing so rapidly that some adjustments will need to be made in education so that teachers, as part of society, will be able to work fearlessly with these tools. Both webquests and blogs resort to using the web for educational purposes. When appropriately used, the web will surely transform the notion of teaching-learning: lifelong education, change of settings and roles in the teaching-learning processes, etc. The web, indeed, reinforces reading and writing skills as well as promoting the skills of information searching and problem solving.

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## 2. Webquests

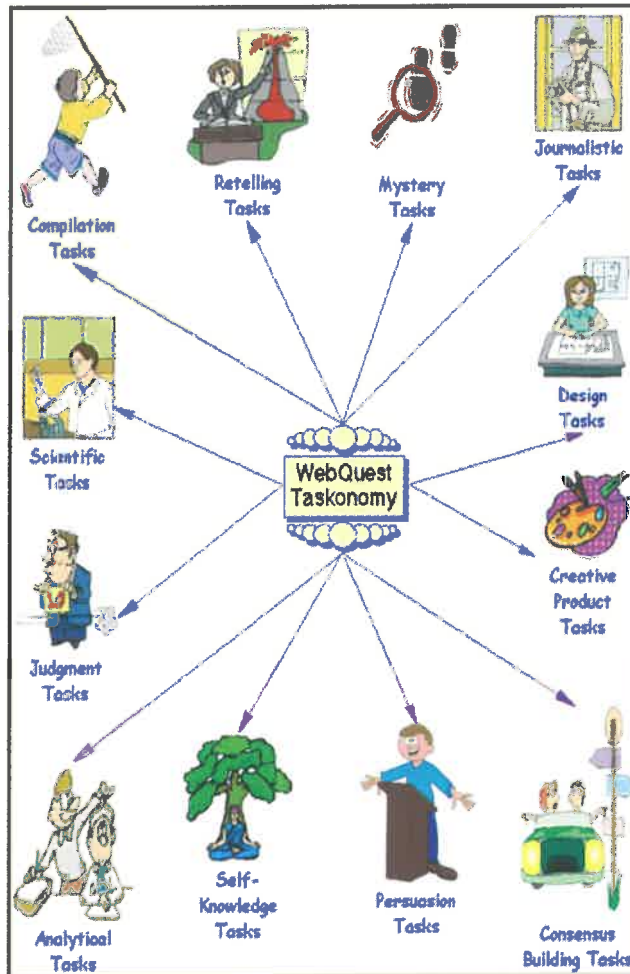
### 2.1. What is a webquest?

According to Bernie Dodge, first and main developer of the Webquest Strategy, a webquest is an inquiry-oriented task in which most or part of the information which students deal with comes from the web and tends to be pre-selected by the teacher. Some of the tasks a webquest may involve include: searching on the net (as a means, not as a finality), choosing relevant information and processing it, retrieving it when necessary, analyzing the information, creating and presenting a final product. Webquests should be distinguished from other web-based learning activities such as Treasure Hunts or Subject Samplers, which may be engaging but in which the goal is not a task that requires synthesis or any of the thinking skills that webquests target. Rather they pose a kind of working methodology, in which each learner works on its own for the group's sake, thus leading to a cognitive transformation. Webquests are not advisable for solving learning gaps in knowledge of basic concepts. To this end, other web-based learning activities that do not require thinking transformation are more suitable such as concept-builders, subject samplers, etc.

### 2.2. Levels and typology of webquests

Depending on the educational goal, webquests are characterised by different time spans: short term webquests aim at students learning a relevant amount of information whereas long term webquests imply not only knowledge manipulation but also the ability of students to create a product with which others can interact. During the last 10 years, professionals have been working on the development of webquests and adapting them to their own needs so that a certain typology can be defined. However, the borderline between webquest categories may sometimes not be so clear-cut or may overlap since different elements of diverse categories may combine in the very same webquest.

**1. Compilation tasks:** this is the most rudimentary type of quest in the sense that there is little cognitive skill development since students surf through different resources and select information in order to make a compilation (e.g. a cookbook, a collection of plants, etc.). This quest rather implies students' familiarization with some content and its organization and, later on, they gave birth to the so-called Wikis, that is, an online database of open publishing.



**2. Judgement tasks:** after gathering enough data about a special event or fact, students reach a decision and present it.

**3. Retelling tasks:** after a search, students reformulate what they have learnt. In the following example, *The British Isles Webquest*, students practise English while they learn about the culture of an English-speaking country and use Information Technology Resources. Here students are asked to organize and summarize the collected information in order to make a final product: a PowerPoint presentation of the country. Learners, in a guided process and working in small teams, adopt different roles so that each of them performs different tasks that will provide them with the information required for the final product: the geographer is in charge of gathering data on the geographical features of The British Isles, the historian has to surf through historical events and outstanding figures of the country and the tourist needs to find travelling information in order to create a virtual trip to a city.



The British Isles WebQuest

Introduction

Process

Sites

Tasks

Teachers

Credits

## Process

The members of the working team will assume one of the following roles:

- **Geographer:** You will gather information on some aspects of British Geography
- **Historian:** You will gather information on British History
- **Tourist:** You will gather information to prepare a virtual trip to any destination you choose

According to your role you will

1. Explore some [sites](#) on the web to complete some [tasks](#)
2. Select and process information
3. Use this [template](#) to design an attractive multimedia presentation sharing the information within your team

- [Geographer](#)
- [Historian](#)
- [Tourist](#)

The British Isles Webquest by Amalia López i Purificación Camacho

**4. Persuasion tasks:** unlike retelling tasks, students are presented with a mock real situation and asked to use what they have learned so as to develop a convincing strategy to persuade their audience.

**5. Mystery tasks:** students are trapped in a problem or mystery story to be solved. In *King Tutankhamun: Was it Murder?*, learners are presented with a fascinating webquest that deals with

the mysterious death of the Egyptian king. In order to determine the real truth, students work in teams playing different roles and undertaking a thorough investigation. Although mystery is the main feature that characterises the quest, students are also asked to develop several skills including those of synthesizing and analyzing information from different points of view for them to be able, in the end, to write a persuasive essay defending their position.

## King Tutankhamun Was It Murder?

**A WebQuest**  
Was It Murder?  
The Death of King Tutankhamun:  
The Boy King

Welcome to the King Tut WebQuest! I'm anxious for you to help solve this mystery. Be sure to check out everything around my tomb. Thanks!

| [Introduction](#) | [Task](#) | [Process](#) | [Resources](#) |  
| [Evaluation](#) | [Conclusion](#) | [Teacher Directions](#) |

♀ Introduction ♀

King Tut has been fascinating students and adults alike since the discovery of his tomb in 1922. Why has so much interest been generated about this unremarkable pharaoh? Could it be the fabulous gold and treasure discovered in his tomb? Or is it the mystery surrounding the boy king's early death? You and your renowned team have been hired by the Egyptian government to determine if King Tut was murdered. Your team will have only 3 days to complete your work.

**6. Creative tasks:** the aim is to create a final product in a specific area and a specific format (e.g. a painting, a radio performance, etc.). Unlike design tasks, they are much more open and volatile and the final product tends to be ascribed to a particular artistic style.

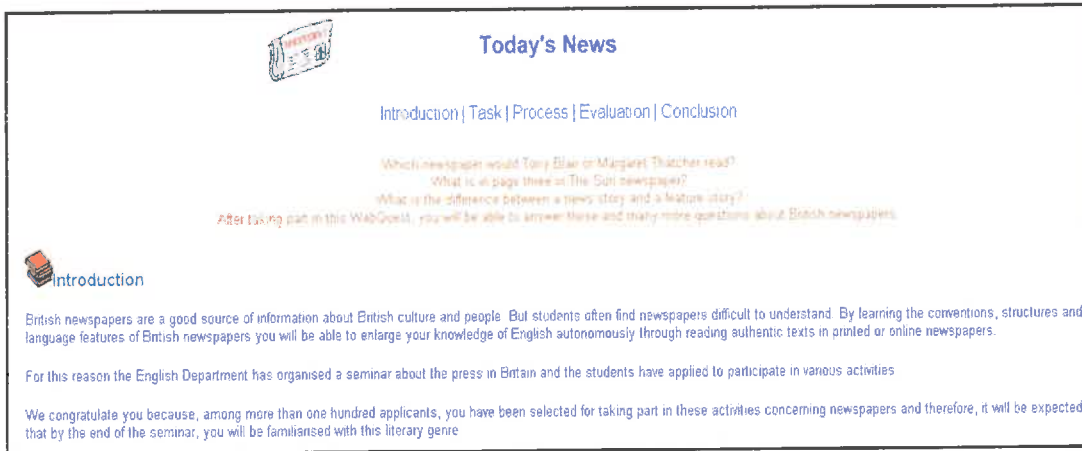
**7. Journalistic tasks:** adopting the role of journalists, students gather information, organize it and report it according to the journalistic genre. In Today's News webquest, students learn about the press in Britain and how information is structured and presented so that at the end of the workshop they are able to write two front pages for two different papers.

**12. Scientific tasks:** in order to see how science works, these tasks, sometimes with a mysterious question, propose true experience by practicing with real science. A scientific task includes skills such as making hypothesis, testing them and, at the end, contrasting the result with the initial prediction.

### 2.3. Structure and design of webquests

As mentioned above, webquests should be designed with a purpose in mind for students to perform when surfing the net. For this reason, webquests usually follow a structural pattern. To begin with, webquests are presented with an introduction that describes the les-

son, sets the stage, and identifies the level it is aimed at and the prior knowledge that is required to undertake the task. A brief description of the expected outcome and the skills



A webquest by Isabel Pérez

**8. Design tasks:** students are prompted to create a product that accomplishes some predefined goal. In *The Sky's the Limit*, students have just founded a new company that creates travel brochures *à la carte*, thus helping tourists with no time and resources to design their holidays.

**9. Analytical tasks:** students are asked to look closely at certain things (physical or abstract) and examine them carefully in order to establish different relationships (cause-effect, similarities-differences, etc.).

**10. Self-knowledge tasks:** this is the least common type of webquest since it attempts to develop oneself and articulate a personal insight through an exploration of the on-and-off line resources.

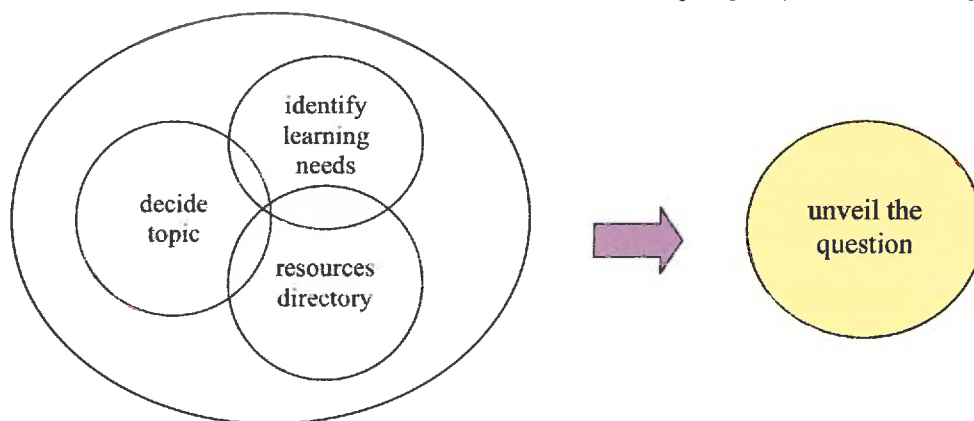
**11. Consensus tasks:** there are topics that, because of their nature, are intrinsically controversial. This type of tasks requires presenting differing points of view on the same topic, analysing them in order to reach a conclusion.

used may be provided. Most webquests include the information resources needed, either by supplying the links to the World Wide Web or through bibliographical references or just attaching documents in the very same site. The processes the learners need to successfully accomplish the task are described in detail. In this sense, learners are guided, step by step, in organizing their information as well as in evaluating their performance. Finally, the quest concludes in a way that shows students the importance of the lesson learned.

From this brief description of the content of a webquest, the basic steps in webquest creation are presented.

1. Planning beforehand: to the neophyte webquest designer, it may be of great value to visit some already made pages. Webquest creation should start with the decision of a topic according to your students' interests, their specific needs or just because it fits in with their curriculum (e.g. a journey to the British Isles, a story read in class, a box office film, etc.). Before identifying the learning gaps for students to fill, teachers should be aware of the consistency of the online

resources, indiscriminately gathering and organizing this raw material in a kind of inventory. Lastly, before beginning the webquest design process, the main question –the quest in itself- that lies behind the webquest must be posed. To ensure the success of the design it is worth valuing and taking into account the richness in resources and in relevance, as well as evaluating the enhancement in cognitive and thinking skills that the webquest will represent.

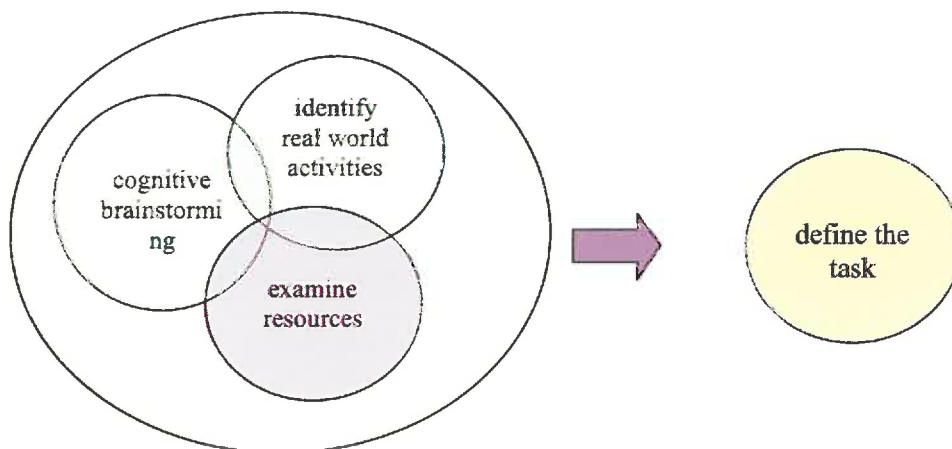


stage to revisit the web for better resources or to change the webquest topic in itself. Special attention should be paid to establish a basic knowledge of the subject so that students can engage in the task with similar background positions. Finally, the learning tasks are to be thought out in terms of a final and physical, if possible, product that will be representative of the learning outcome. The product is going to define the tasks the different roles are going to perform. Although slightly different in content and procedure,

tasks go hand-in-hand to form a unique final result (e.g. write an e-mail, design a poster, make a presentation, perform a play, etc.) and this should mirror a real world activity that involves true learning.

2. In the second phase of the design process, the webquest is given a shape and the first draft may already be produced. At this stage all the possible cognitive transformation tasks<sup>1</sup> that could be involved in the quest are brainstormed even though the first step in the quest be simple “information gathering”. It may be highly useful to sort out the web resources by means of a definite criterion (i.e. information classification into topics, job-roles, perspectives, levels, etc.) and rigorously examine them for educational purposes. Should the sites collection be poor or irrelevant, it would be useful at this

3. The last step consists in designing and actually writing the webquest. Difficult as it may seem to use an HTML editor like FrontPage or Dreamweaver, creating a web page may be much easier when using a template that guides the teacher into the creation of the webquest. The most challenging aspect of this part is to ensure a really engaging introduction that catches students’ attention and drives them naturally into the task/question. A general introduction should be clearly stated at the very beginning so that later on it may derive into more specific roles for students to develop. Transformative thinking tasks are better introduced



after students have completed their assigned roles, that is, when students are prepared to share different knowledge. The conclusion also needs to pose a semantic sense that returns to the initial reasoning and engages learners into critical thinking of the skills developed through the activities they undertook.

1. Dodge’s Webquest Strategy is based on the constructivist idea of transformation of raw data into knowledge, into meaningful learning. In this sense, the proposed tasks should bridge the learning gap, that is, they should take into account the transformation of input into a significant outcome for students.

Finally, once the webquest has been implemented and revised, a server needs to be found to deliver the final version of the quest. Alternatively, some web pages offer free space where the quest can be published or even saved in the hard disk of a central computer as a kind of intranet, when access to the net is inadequate or inexistent.

### **2.4. Why webquests?**

Motivation is the main factor in determining success in language learning (Gardner): if motivation is present, success in language learning is guaranteed. The so-called Dotcom or Click generation has been altered by a technological revolution, which still has to make a deep impact in our educational system. Using different types of tasks increases student motivation in the use of language. Webquests, thus, were developed with learner motivation in mind even though the resulting effects have been beneficial to both teaching-learning processes. On the one hand, they offer opportunities for teachers to explore content resources on the net in order to integrate them in classroom instruction at low cost. Teachers with few skills in IT can make use of web-based activities available on the web or adapt existing ones to their purposes, thus encouraging teachers' creation and initiating a circle of opinion sharing between professionals. On the other hand, webquests have a pedagogical value in the sense that they foster opportunities for richer interdisciplinary content learning and allow the development of skills to deal appropriately with information: webquests help students think and reason and use information and resources to solve problems. Integration of IT in the classroom allows for student's understanding of concepts through collaborative work and also teaches them how to translate theory into practice.

## **3. Weblogs**

### **3.1. What is a weblog?**

Another recent web-based application for knowledge acquisition is the creation and subsequent use of weblogs, also referred as blogs. Edublogs or schoolblogs, as they are known in the educational field, can be defined as personal interactive e-diaries/journals. These sites are open to public in general as they allow reader's interaction through responses to a given entry or by exposing their opinions on a topic. They tend to be a free of charge writing space on the net and, unlike tradi-

tional web pages, content publishing is dynamic and immediate from any remote system with web connection, since typing is direct into the browser and publication on the web just requires the click of a button. Most of the time, blogs take the form of a digital diary in which each contribution is timely registered and continuously updated so that readers can follow the discussion chronologically, according to the owner's preferences.

Blogs are specially useful because they do not require high IT skills and because they are great repositories for storing data generated in the classroom. Part of the simplicity of using blogs stems from the fact that no specific software is required so that difficulty in creating a blog depends on the level of complexity the owner desires. In order to avoid the use of a programming language, there exist on the net different tools (e.g. Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)), Pitas (<http://www.pitas.com>), Movable Type (<http://www.movabletype.org>), Greymatter (<http://www.noahgrey.com/greysoft/>), diary Land (<http://usuario.diaryland.com>) amongst others) which offer the registered owner a series of templates that will help them to design, delete, rewrite, control comments, etc. Because of their quickness and relative ease of publishing, blogs are increasingly starting to grow for several purposes since the beginning of the World Wide Web and specially after the Edublog Awards in 2004.

Like webquests, edublogs offer several advantages to both the teaching-learning practice. A reflective journal may be created with different purposes in mind. When using blogs, not only are educators including IT resources in their teaching practice, but they are also voicing their inner ideas about blog applications in the classroom (The English BLOG, at <http://jeffreyhill.typepad.com/english/>). In this sense, weblogs represent a space for reflection, sharing and recording teaching practices. In language learning, blogs are suitable to invite student comments and, thus, implement reading and writing skills both individually or in group. Apart from the intrinsic motivational aspects mentioned above, blogs empower learners with a sense of ownership, when they are the blog creators, and endows them with a personal space to express themselves and publish online. The fact that their contributions can instantly be read by a real audience –classmates, friends, teachers, parents, etc.– enhances the real meaning of the writing task.

### **3.2. Why edublogs?**

Because of different levels of IT skills among teachers, blogs represent a great advantage in the sense

that there is neither a need to learn HTML, nor to acquire any kind of specific software as the very same weblogs provide with free templates to design and administer the page. Blogs are a means of communication more structured than a simple list of e-mails or a group of newsletters. Their structure creates a framework where students can socially interact and are incited to communicate. Being the net worldwide accessible, work is not subjugated to school limits and it can be developed at home, at the library, etc. Furthermore, teachers may add a blogroll, that is, a list of recommended external links, so that students may be guided into new information resources for learning.

### 3.3. Using blogs in EFL teaching

Although in Spain there has not been as much support for the development of blogs –only a few experimentations at university level- as in Anglo-Saxon countries, secondary teachers are, bit by bit, introducing this web-resource as part of their classroom instruction and, what is more, as work students will be assessed on. Blogging in EFL class –which may include literary criticism, artistic interpretations of passages, film reviews, etc.- may seem to be restricted to give writing practice to advanced students who, with a higher command of language, can express themselves more fluently. As opposed to this, *Feel the Season*, a blog for Japanese beginner students of English, in which learners post seasonal pictures with a brief comment on their feelings and inspirations, shows how with imagination and basic language, blogs are useful even at the earliest stages of learning.

In the blog Elizabeth Fullerton designed, the author uses the web space as a guiding blog in the sense that it gives instruction regularly to the learners as regards homework, syllabus information and resources for self-study. This site, however, does not encourage online student verbal exchange. A similar example is provided in the blog *Our Class 2005*, a blog for EFL students in Australia.

### 4. Conclusion

As mentioned above teachers may have good reasons to work with web-based approaches, mainly for relevant and richer learning encouragement through higher levels of motivation. The form of expression may vary as technological resources evolve, yet the underlying motivation remains. Nevertheless, they are not the answer for language knowledge. Webquests need to be designed following a logical order so as not to lose the sense of the original goal. Occasionally, tasks may be too complex and they might take too much time to be carried out. At times it is difficult to propose tasks that are really effective without assaulting the very pedagogical value that they aim at. Newspapers in schools remain, most of the time, dusted in lockers and they rarely work to stimulate students into writing, and using them results somehow artificial, not welcoming and meaningless. Should teachers think the same about blogs just because they, being a new means of communication, have an intrinsic power that implies a new referential framework for students to write?

#### Red pink



Red and pink are so friendly

Pink and green are good company

So it is a lovely earth

Posted by saki at [10:15 AM](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#)

#### My friends




We are friends.

We are partner.

We are swimming comfortably.

Posted by kurumi at [10:13 AM](#) | [Comments \(1\)](#)

**Welcome to English IVa Advanced!**



Welcome to English IVa - Advanced! As we have discussed in class, we will be using this site for announcements, blog assignments, supplemental material, etc.


Make sure that you check this site each week on Mondays and Thursdays to see what we are covering for the week. You never know, I may give you some test answers from time to time to reward those of you who are checking in.

Sometimes you'll have to download notes and bring them with you to class. Make sure that you do it on time! If your printer isn't working or your computer has died, you can always stop by the library in the morning or afternoon and print them out. It shouldn't take long at all.


This week you will have two assignments:

- 1) Sign up to be a member of our class blog.
- 2) Download notes from the following link and bring them to class on Wednesday, August 3rd.

**our class 2005**



Wednesday, August 16, 2005




**Today's Work**

looks as if we may be going back to winter this weekend, though it's been snowing in the Blue Mountains, parts of Victoria (even in coastal towns where it hadn't snowed for 50 years at least) and many areas of NSW

1. Go to the [forum](#) and take part in this week's discussion: *My son is 26 and still at home!*
2. We shouldn't complain, though. Read **THIS WEEK'S STORY** in [Time4English](#). It relates to natural phenomena (discussed previously) and to your classmate Nelli's work with the Tsunami Appeal.
3. Go to [Lower Intermediate: 7 It just happened!](#) and do all the exercises (7A-7E).

Last weekend was beautifully sunny, perfect for a day out at sea!!

**About Me**



Name: Paula  
Location: Deiruz, New South Wales, Australia  
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In any case, working with IT should not be seen as an isolated activity devoid of curricular significance and pedagogical justification and, for this reason, educators may wonder how to exploit and integrate the possibilities of technological advances for further learning goals. Parental permission and server space are also other minor barriers teachers should take into account. However, these difficulties may

be easily overcome with such simple solutions as obtaining a signed form from parents.

All in all, these new teaching methods cannot be implemented until schools are equipped with the right technology, time and comfort level to support classroom tutoring.

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## ENGLISH CAN BE FUN AND ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE

WE KNOW THAT THE NEED TO BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS NOWADAYS GREATER THAN EVER BEFORE FOR WORK, CULTURAL AND LEISURE REASONS. ALL THESE REASONS HAVE LED TO CONSIDERING THAT CHILDREN NEED TO FINISH THEIR SECONDARY EDUCATION WITH A CERTAIN DEGREE OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH, AS WELL AS THE APPROPRIATE MECHANISMS TO ALLOW THEM TO CONTINUE LEARNING THROUGHOUT THEIR ADULT LIFE. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT THAT INDIVIDUALS BE AWARE OF THEIR OWN LEARNING STYLES.

by **Cristina Mallo**

Learning a new language is probably one of the most difficult challenges students will face during their schooling. One reason is that it requires the students to actively engage in a culture and way of life which is very different from their own. During the process of acquiring knowledge, students tend to

show clear preferences for different ways of learning. These ways of learning are shaped by the culture and context a person lives in. Our society, for example, focuses too much on linguistics and mathematics neglecting other ways of thinking, such as visual, kinaesthetic, musical, naturalist, existential,

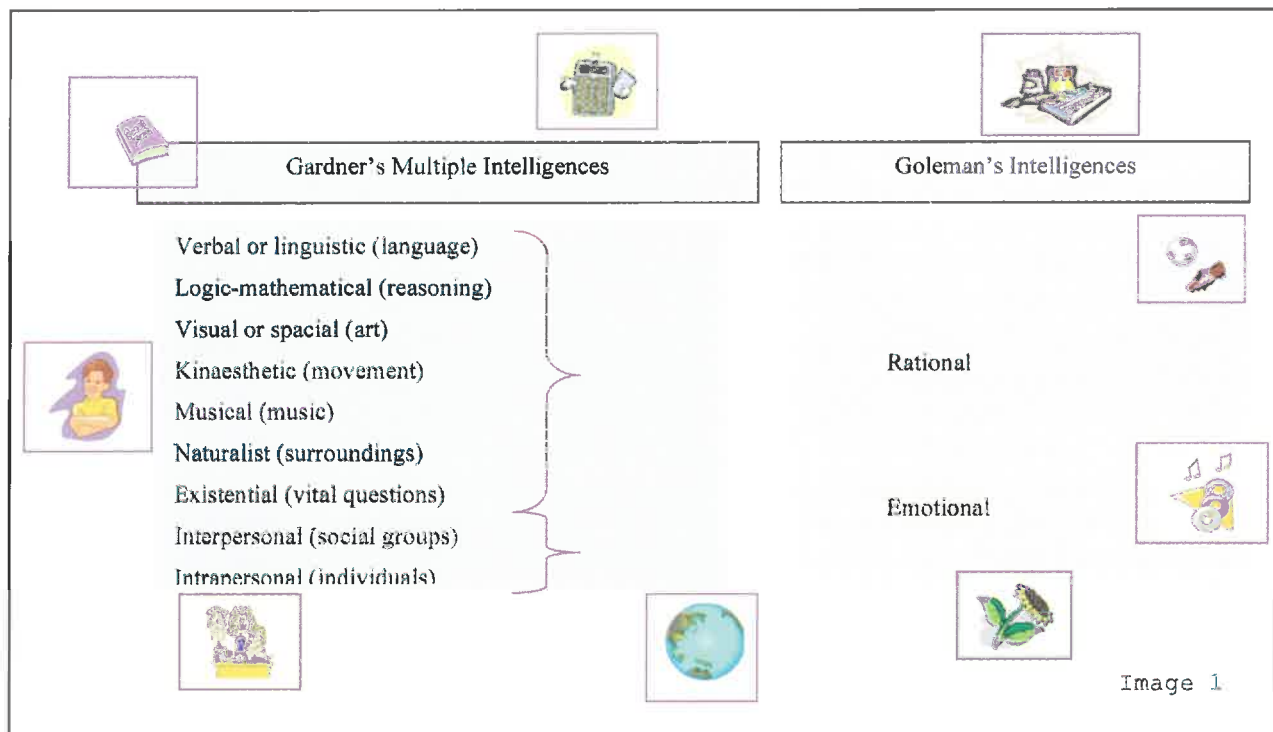


Image 1

CRISTINA MALLOL HAS BEEN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES (ENGLISH AND FRENCH) IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR MORE THAN 8 YEARS. SHE IS A MEMBER OF THE RESEARCH GROUP "EDUCACIÓ ARTÍSTICA I PATRIMONI" AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GIRONA. SHE HAS ALSO BEEN WORKING ON THE PROJECT "INNOVACIÓ EDUCATIVA MITJANÇANT LES NOVES TECNOLOGIES: LLENGÜES ESTRANGERES I TRADUCCIÓ" DIRECTED BY MARÍA GONZÁLEZ DAVIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF VIC. SHE IS INTERESTED IN USING NEURO LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING AND MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES TO ENGAGE EVERY INDIVIDUAL STUDENT IN A CLASSROOM. SHE IS CURRENTLY WRITING HER DOCTORAL DISSERTATION AFTER AN EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH CARRIED OUT DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2004-2005.

interpersonal and intrapersonal. These nine typologies of thought are what Gardner (1983) called Multiple Intelligences. These intelligences were later classified by Goleman (1996) as rational and emotional (see image 1). Goleman stated that any human being has "two minds, one that thinks and one that feels ... the rational mind and the emotional mind". Nevertheless, the first scholars to talk about "emotional intelligence" were Salovey and Mayer (1990). Managing our feelings is an extremely essential ingredient of this type of intelligence because our emotions are resources for achieving any outcome.

According to Jeremy Harmer (2004: 25), in the field of foreign language learning (and I think in every aspect of life), learning ought to consist of the following three steps:

- A. **Engagement:** learners have to be interested and motivated to learn.
- B. **Studying:** the need to learn leads to the study (either formal or informal) of what is required.
- C. **Activation:** when learners activate their knowledge it means that they have consolidated it and are therefore able to put it into practice.

Teachers can influence and guide all these three steps. Firstly, the teaching staff should involve or **engage** learners' feelings in any content to be taught. But how can teachers involve student's feelings?

- 1) Through appealing and relevant present-day topics.
- 2) By stimulating a desire to learn to communicate.
- 3) Through the teacher's attitude towards the subject matter and towards students.
- 4) Through innovative, attractive and varied resources.

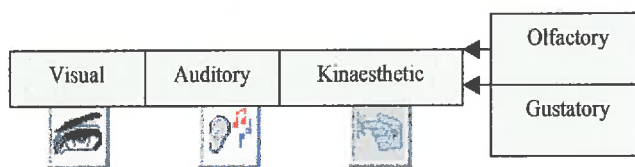
1) Concerning topics, English teachers ought to design syllabuses which are content-based (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Learners are simultaneously language students and students of whatever subject is being taught. Secondary school students lose their fear to communicate in a foreign language when they really want to express their opinions.

2) In relation to the desire to communicate, an action-oriented syllabus helps to keep in mind that learners are primarily "social agents", i.e. members of a society who have tasks to accomplish in particular contexts or fields of action. It is vital to provi-

de students with a full range of real life situations to be able to communicate with real English speaking people. The internet is a good source to put this idea into practice through chats, e-mail exchanges, or maybe trying to organise a real trip.

3) "One reaps what one has sown." Students can easily perceive whether the teacher likes what (s)he is teaching. If the teacher feels comfortable and enjoys him/herself while being in the classroom, the atmosphere is going to be conducive to learning. Every individual is unique. Acceptance should be the general trend in all classrooms, especially nowadays when many of our schools are multicultural.

I would like to connect this last viewpoint to neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). NLP was created in the early 60s at the University of California by the mathematician, Richard Bandler, and the linguistics professor, John Grinder. This approach encourages individuals to have a good self-image and consequently provides an adequate inner atmosphere to learn. It is based on many presuppositions, however one of the main ones is: "The map is not the territory". This means that mental maps of the world are not the world itself (Andreas & Faulkner 1994: 35). The world and the experience of the world individuals have are not the same thing; since experience goes through the senses or "representational systems" of each person: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, olfactory and gustatory (the olfactory and gustatory are often included under the kinaesthetic system). Hence, all students perceive what the teacher teaches differently.



The NLP approach is exceptionally valuable for the studying step. Anything, before being learned, is perceived. Even though students can imbibe information through any of their representational systems, individuals do develop a preferred representational system.

Given the diversity of learners in a classroom, it is very important to be aware of individual preferences (as the European Framework of References states) in order for the effective "study" to take place. Activities, tasks and projects should be as varied and flexible as possible to cater for every student.

4) Finally, on the subject of innovative, attractive and varied resources, learners should be motivated to learn, as “motivation is the first factor to predict success in learning” (Gardner: 1993). One way to motivate learners is through the use of computers, as they are real, modern as well as fascinating tools. Computers “take human capabilities in new directions pushing back the boundaries of our experiences” (Pennington, M. 1996: 11). That is why they have become, in just a few years, a solid device in language learning.

The internet is very well-stocked; the input one gets can be really adequate:

- quantitatively, as it is varied and diverse, and
- qualitatively, as there are many possibilities for acquiring and developing information.

Moreover, computers provide visual, auditory and kinaesthetic ways of looking at information and activating knowledge. There are a lot of images, the layout of its software is appealing and there is also the possibility of hearing many different things.

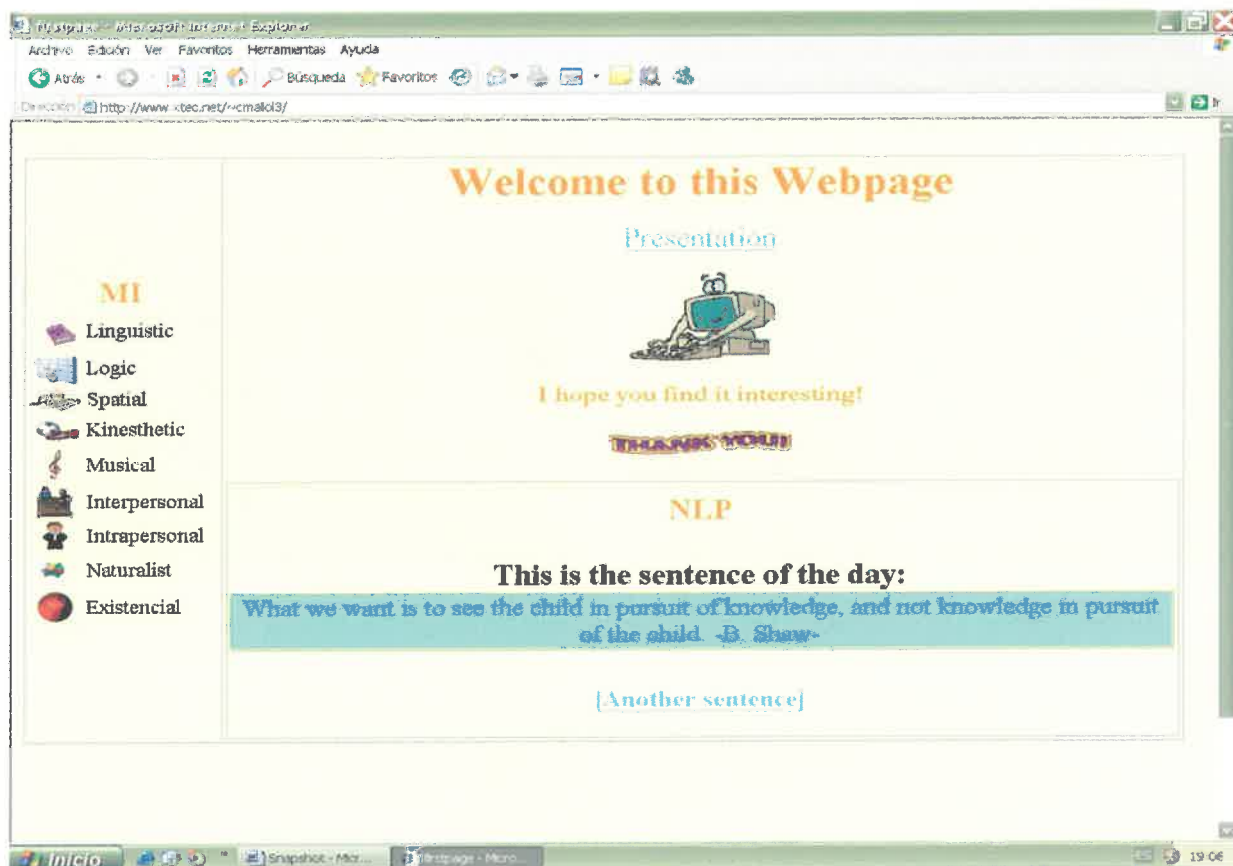
Computers are individualizing tools (they support individual learning styles and needs) and at the same time socializing tools (as they allow linguistic

exchanges among different people). To learn a language, people should interact: face to face (gesturing), ear to ear (speaking or listening), or mind to mind (reading or writing), and all of these are possible using the Internet.

Therefore, to support the diversity of learning styles and learning demands and interests, new technologies are incredibly useful, since one can acquire more individualized and consequently more meaningful learning. Through computerized learning students are more and more autonomous and become skilled at recognizing their own learning needs.

“English is Fun” (<http://www.xtec.net/~cmalol3>) is a web site created firstly to share the methodology presented here with students and to learn different topics in a “customized” way. All intelligences and representational systems are reflected in one way or another through the different activities, tasks and projects proposed.

The material is flexible, that is to say, it can be changed according to the feedback the teacher receives about the students’ needs. The site uses a social constructivist methodology. The language is learned in a given context with a specific cultural background. The contents are displayed through activities, tasks and projects that are mostly methodology- and student-centred.



In every classroom there should be a mixture of as many different types of activities as possible to motivate and reach the needs and interests of all students. The wide range of activities, tasks and projects available should make it possible for all students to find information that suits their learning style. Due to a variety of opportunities to access the same content by different means, students will be encouraged to learn. As the learner becomes active, the teacher adopts the roles of supervisor, facilitator and mediator. In conclusion, pedagogically speaking, it is essential for students to feel confident in their capacity to influence their progress in a subject as demanding as that of learning a new language. This is why every student should be thought of as an individual learner. Body and brain form a learning duet and most sensory stimuli are filtered by individual's emotions, shaped by their interrelationships and their physical surrounding (Sylwester, 1995). Thus, we can infer that affective engagement is fundamental to motivate individuals to achieve significant learning. Emotions constitute the psychological scaffold of any student and will help him/her to learn.

Summing up, teachers should help every individual student to delve more deeply into their conscious and unconscious thoughts in order to understand, accept and serve their own learning style.

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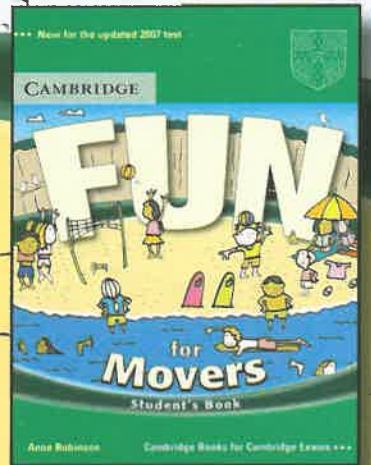
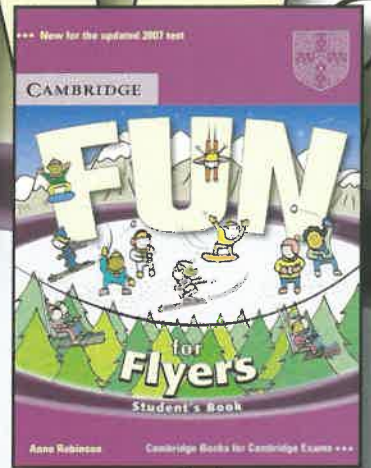
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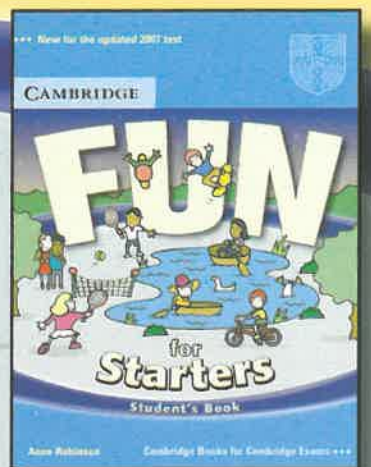
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## SONGS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

NOWADAYS WE HAVE TO CONSIDER POP SONGS AS A HIGHLY MOTIVATING TEACHING RESOURCE, BUT UNGRADED LANGUAGE AND UNCLEAR DICTION CAN OFTEN POSE PROBLEMS AND LIMIT OUR CHOICES. CONCERNING PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO SONGS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM, WE SHALL MAKE A BRIEF MENTION OF UNITED MAGAZINE, PUBLISHED BY HEINEMANN. THIS MAGAZINE OFFERS ESO TEACHERS AND STUDENTS A COLLECTION OF TWELVE PURPOSE-WRITTEN CONTEMPORARY SONGS PLUS AN ACCOMPANYING COMIC STRIP, WITH THE LINGUISTIC CONTENTS APPROPRIATELY GRADED TO THE STUDENTS' LEVEL AND NEEDS. NEVERTHELESS, IN ORDER TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES THE TEACHER CAN USE IN THE CLASSROOM, WE SHALL QUOTE FRAGMENTS BELONGING TO OTHER SONGS BY WELL-KNOWN SINGERS OR GROUPS AS GOOD EXAMPLES TO WORK WITH IN THE CLASSROOM.

by Salvador Montaner

In this article we are going to explain some activities for each stage of a lesson, through which we can exploit these songs and give practice to all language skills. The activities are generic and can thus be applied to any other pop song (and any stage of the ESO cycle or Batxillerat).

### WHY USE POP SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM?

Before concentrating on the various activities we shall propose below, it is important that we explain very briefly some reasons why learners should deal with songs in the classroom. The main reasons we can think of are:

- 1.- Students love them; songs are very motivating.
- 2.-Songs are great for aspects of pronunciation, word and sentence stress.
- 3.- Research says that melody and rhythm help us process and recall structures more easily.

However, language is not graded and diction can be unclear.

### ACTIVITIES

If we want our learners to improve their language skills through songs, we shall classify the various activities into three different phases:

- A) Pre-listening activities.
- B) Listening activities.
- C) Post-listening activities.

#### A) Pre-listening activities

These activities involve that learners have to manage with the language (students get familiarised with some concrete vocabulary and with specific language structures) and with the theme, that is, the situation of the song in the context.

SALVADOR MONTANER VILLALBA HOLDS A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ENGLISH PHILOLOGY FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF VALENCIA. HE HAS RECEIVED A DIPLOMA IN ADVANCED STUDIES FROM THE SAME UNIVERSITY. HE IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON HIS PH.D. THESIS ON SHAKESPEARE. HE WAS THE HEAD OF STUDIES OF A PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOL IN VALENCIA, WHERE, AT THE SAME TIME, HE BEGAN TEACHING ENGLISH IN SEPTEMBER 1998. HE HAS BEEN WORKING, IN THE DEPT. OF EDUCATION OF THE GENERALITAT OF CATALONIA, AS A SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER IN COMPULSORY SECONDARY EDUCATION SINCE 2002. ALTHOUGH HIS THESIS DEALS WITH SHAKESPEARE, HE IS ALSO INTERESTED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND HE HAS PUBLISHED ARTICLES IN THE TESOL-SPAIN AND APAC JOURNALS.

Some activities we might consider are:

### 1.- Blankety-blank.

This activity can be done in groups of 5 or 6 learners. It consists of predicting the missing word or inventing the next line.

### 2.- Key words

If the song has a message or tells a story, the teacher might consider writing the key words on the board and asking learners guess the context. Another option is to visit [www.puzzlemaker.com](http://www.puzzlemaker.com) and put the words in a word soup.

### 3.- Running dictation

This activity can be done in pairs or in groups, according to the number of verses the song may have. For example, let us suppose that there are only two verses in the song. The teacher gives the students two different handouts, where they have different lines from the same song. The lines are not placed in the correct order.

*Student A* dictates the sentences from the first verse to *Student B*. *Student B* then dictates to his partner the sentences from the second verse. Once both students have written down their lines, they have to order them before listening to the song. The aim here is that they predict what the order of the lines might be and later they check whether they have done it properly or not when they listen to the song.

The activity we propose here should be done in groups of three. We have here the song *Just my Imagination* by The Cranberries, which has got three verses. *Student A* has got the first verse, whose lines are placed in this way:

And stay in bed until Sunday  
We would hit the town on Friday  
There was a game we used to play  
Living not for reality  
We used to be so free  
We were living for the love we had

*Student B* has got the second verse, which is quoted as follows:

I have always kept my faith in love  
Let it never be said that I'd be unstable  
There was a time I used to pray  
It's the greatest thing from the man above  
The game I used to play  
I've always put my cards upon the table

*Student C*, finally, has got the third verse:

I like to hit the town on Friday night  
And stay in bed until Sunday  
Living not for reality  
We will be living for the love we have  
There is a game I like to play  
We'll always be this free

*Student A* dictates his or her verses to *Student B*, then *Student B* to *Student C* and lastly this student to *Student A*. Once they have finished, they are told that the lines are not in order, so they have to predict and guess, before listening to the song, what the order of the lines might be. They will check it later listening to the song.

### 4.- Match the rhyming words.

The teacher asks learners to match words that rhyme (usually at the end of lines). Most of the words must be present in the song, but not necessarily. This is an ideal preparation for an ordering or "inserting the missing lines" activity.

For example, let us consider the song by Green Day, which is called *Basket Case*.

Do you have the time  
To listen to me whine  
About nothing and everything  
All at once  
I am one of those  
Melodramatic fools  
Neurotic to the bone  
No doubt about it

Sometimes I give myself the creeps  
Sometimes my mind plays tricks on me  
It all keeps adding up  
I think I'm cracking up  
Am I just paranoid?  
Or I'm just stoned

I went to a shrink  
To analyze my dreams  
She says it's lack of sex  
That's bringing me down  
I went to a whore  
She said my life's a bore  
So quit my whining cause  
It's bringing her down

Sometimes I give myself the creeps  
Sometimes my mind plays tricks on me  
It all keeps adding up  
I think I'm cracking up  
Am I just paranoid?  
Uh,yuh,yuh,ya (x2)

TASK: Match rhyming words from Column A to Column B. Some words are in the song, other are not.

A	B
WHORE	TOES
CREEPS	CRACKING
THOSE	BORE
ADDING	TOOLS
DREAMS	WHINE
GIVE	TRICKS
FOOLS	CREEPS
WINE	LIVE

Once learners have matched the rhyming words, the teacher might get them to order the lines of the song or to complete the missing lines as a listening activity.

#### 5.- Use the students' knowledge.

This activity is a great opportunity to connect with a genuine teen interest area. The teacher here gets students to invent questions about a theme related to the song or the genre of music of the songs.

#### B) Listening activities

These activities focus obviously on training learners' listening skills. Some activities to be considered are:

#### 6.- Discrimination.

The teacher asks learners to choose the right word from two alternatives. There are obviously various sets of alternatives within the song. Let us see, for instance, a fragment of the song by Shania Twain,

Life **will/ was goin'** great  
 Love **was/is** gonna have to wait  
 Was in no hurry-had no worries  
 Stayin' single was the plan  
**won't need/didn't need** a steady man  
 I had it covered-'til I discovered

That love **gets/is getting** me every time  
 My heart **changed/has changed** my mind  
 I got' darn gone and done it

Gone and done it (gone and done it)  
 Guess I **fell/will fall** in love (gone and done it)  
 Must've been the way he **will walk/walked** (gone and done it)  
 Or his sweet, sweet talk (gone and done it)  
 I guess I got' darn gone and done it

*Love gets me every time*

The aim here is that learners have to choose the correct word from each pair. This activity might also be called a *multiple choice activity*, in that learners have to choose the right word from two. This type of task might be considered for *lexical* purposes or *grammatical* purposes, depending on what we want our learners to focus on.

Students can also do this activity by first reading and then listening to check. This means that the *multiple choice activity* or *discrimination activity* can also be used as a pre-listening activity. The teacher decides what he/she aims to achieve depending on the usage of the activity.

NOTE: Once students have chosen the right word, another task to be considered might be that the teacher asks learners to remember some words because he/she is going to omit some of them and ask learners to say them aloud. This activity is just memoristic.

#### Students as teachers!

If the teacher has access to computers, then he/she will ask students to create gap-fills for each other. They could either choose which words to take out or older classes could work with specific parts of speech.

#### Order the lines.

The teacher here photocopies the lyrics in the wrong order and gets students to re-order them by numbers.

The Cranberries, *Animal Instinct*

I was utterly and totally stressed  
 Do you know you made me cry  
 As I was having my cup of tea  
 Suddenly I was feeling depressed  
 Do you know you made me die  
 Suddenly something has happened to me

It was a lovely thing that we  
 It is a lovely thing, the animal  
 And the thing that freaks me out  
 Is you'll never really see  
 It is a lovely thing that we have  
 And the thing that gets to me  
 The animal instinct  
 Is I'll always be in doubt



Is you'll never really see  
 They will never make me die  
 We will change reality  
 So take my hands and we will pray  
 They won't take you away  
 They will never make me cry, no  
 Is I'll always be in doubt  
 And the thing that freaks me out  
 And the thing that gets to me  
 So take my hands and come with me

The animal, the animal,  
 The animal instinct in me  
 It? The animal, the animal,  
 The animal instinct in me (x2)

*Post-listening activities*

**9.- Pictionary.**

This activity consists of a team game. Students draw or mime lines from the song that they have been working on for their teammates to guess.

**10.- What comes next?**

The teacher plays the song and stops the tape from time to time. The teacher then asks students what comes next.

**11.- Disappearing song.**

The teacher writes the song lyrics on the board and gradually rubs them out. Students are challenged to remember them.

**12.- Write an extra verse!**

See the **Song Writing Workshop** section and follow the step-by-step guide.

**13.- Project work.**

Learners might consider choosing from among three different options:

- **POSTER** – about the group, a concert involving the group or a concrete singer, or a theme related to the song.
- **VIDEO CLIP** – for the song. Frame by frame, on A3 card, including narrative and speech bubbles.
- **INTERVIEW** or **LETTER** – write to the band or create an imaginary interview with them.

**14.- Interpreting and reviewing the song.**

Students from 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of ESO enjoy singing!

An interesting task for learners to review the song might be the following activity:

a) How was the singer feeling when he/she sang this song?

Tick (✓):	angry	happy	sad	romantic	relaxed
		broken-hearted		in love	

b) How do you feel about the song? Do you like the song? Why or why not?

Is it:	catchy	boring	repetitive	fun	old-fashioned	original
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**SONG WRITING WORKSHOP**

1.- a) Look at the four lines below. How many syllables are there in each line?

I've got my eyes  
 You've got your smile  
 It's no surprise  
 That we've got style

b) Say each line to your partner and decide which are the stressed syllables.

c) Now put a big square above each stressed syllable and a small square above each unstressed syllable. This is called a *stress pattern*.

For example



2. Three of these sentences have the same stress pattern as the 4 lines above. One is different. Which?

- a) my cat is dead
- b) there's the postman
- c) we don't wear shoes
- d) I want a drink

3. Look at your *stress pattern* in 1 and 2 above. Make more sentences. You can use the suggestions below, but you must make AT LEAST ONE line of your own invention.

**Verbs:**

(don't) like  
love want  
need



dog, hands, shirt, etc.

Love hug  
Kiss  
friend

Boy girl  
heart

**My verse:**

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(This activity has been made from a song within *United Magazine*, Heinemann)



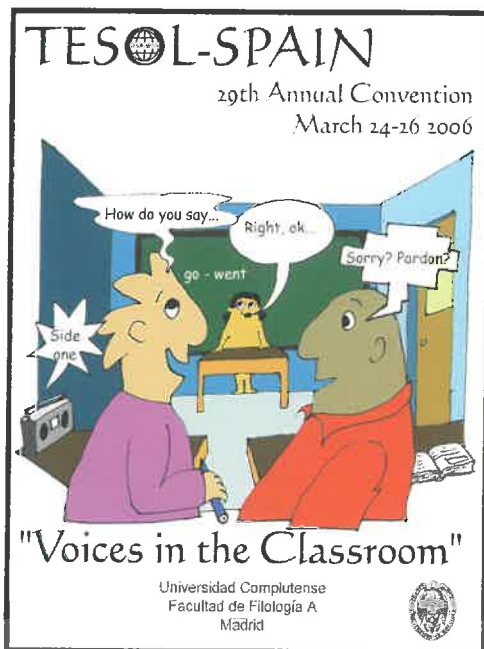
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## FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING TO VERY YOUNG LEARNERS: KEYS FOR DRAWING UP A RESEARCH AND TEACHING PROPOSAL

**English language teaching in the very young learners' classroom.  
A current need.**

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING TO VERY YOUNG LEARNERS HAS BECOME ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. THREE MAIN REASONS SUFFICE TO JUSTIFY THIS FACT: THE INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE KINDERGARTEN ROOMS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS; THE EMERGENCE OF ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD; AND THE INCREASING POPULARITY OF MULTILINGUALISM AS THE KEY TOOL IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW EUROPE.

by Imma Piquer

The reflections on the introduction of English as a foreign language in kindergarten rooms of primary schools, the emergence of English as an international language, and the increasing popularity of multilingualism as the key tool in the construction of a new Europe allow us to agree with the idea that the English language, being the most popular one in the foreign language market, is making a very deep imprint on our society. That is why, day by day, there are more research projects focusing on improving the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Many studies carried out in this area coincide in advising a very early start in the foreign language learning process, when students are still very young, as it will help them gain full control of both the foreign language and their mother tongue in the future. This is why the main objective in promoting English language teaching in day-care centres and primary schools is to make children aware of a different language and culture in a progressive way. A good-quality first contact with the language, based on pleasant aspects, will be the guarantee for students to have a positive approach to the language as well as an appropriate learning of it.

In the chapter referring to the area of foreign lan-

guages, the Ministry of Education's *Diseño Curricular Base* (1989) supports the widely accepted idea that children learn foreign languages much more easily than adults do. This idea is contrasted with the evidence that adults can also learn and, obviously, use a new language with correctness. However, research done on foreign language learning continues to offer enough empirical support to advise the introduction of the foreign language when students are still very young.

However, proposals which have been put into practice by members of the education community to confirm this evidence have not always provided positive changes and social satisfaction when introducing English in kindergartens and the first years of primary education. In many cases, the way to alleviate social pressures has been to assign teachers without enough preparation or motivation to the very young learners' rooms in schools. Under such conditions, which we consider to be a very inefficient teaching procedure, the result is a foreign-language learning process which nowadays has a very low level of prestige. The poor success achieved through the creation of accelerated English programmes and the low motivation of teachers to teach English to such young lear-

INMA PIQUER HAS BEEN TEACHING ENGLISH TO VERY YOUNG LEARNERS IN SEVERAL STATE SCHOOLS DURING THE PAST SEVEN YEARS. LAST JUNE, THE UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA AWARDED HER WITH THE TITLE OF PHD. NAMED "INICIACIÓ A L'ANGLÈS COM A LLENGUA ESTRANGERA EN EDUCACIÓ INFANTIL". SHE HAS ALSO BEEN WORKING FOR OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS IN THE THREE-LEVEL INFANTIL COURSE "THREE IN A TREE". SINCE 2002 SHE HAS BEEN OFFERING PEDAGOGICAL TALKS AND COURSES EITHER ORGANISED BY OUP, APAC, U.B., UAB, ICE OR EITHER BY DEPARTAMENT D'ENSENYAMENT.

ners have damaged the image of some schools. In light of this situation, many parents' responses have been to try to find alternative educational institutions able to guarantee the foreign language learning of their children, resulting in a decision to go with private education (Nussbaum, 1993: 65).

In the dissemination of educational programmes to teach English as a foreign language to very young learners, it is necessary to pay attention to the following problems: poor initiative on the part of schools; the pressure of economic needs; social pressures; a slow evolution of the school institution; and a low amount of human, economic and material resources focusing on teacher training. All of this brings us to the need to innovate with realism and caution, trying to find new models which might answer the needs of children, schools and the society of tomorrow (Garabedian, 1990).

The proposal offered in this article has been created considering the social demand for an early introduction of English as a foreign language in schools, an introduction that would be able to guarantee good quality results.

Our schools have to accept the challenge of teaching English to students who, due to their youth, have specific psycho-developmental characteristics different from those of people who have experienced their first contact with the foreign language after they have achieved the literacy skills of reading and writing. This is why the new situation of introducing the foreign language deserves the agreement of the entire educational community, as such a change in the curriculum of the schools will change a centre's whole philosophy of teaching.

Even considering all the proposals emerging in different schools in our days, we cannot forget that English language teaching to very young learners is still an innovative area of foreign language teaching. This fact makes it very new in the field of research and, thus, very few studies have been carried out (Rixon, 1992), resulting in a significant lack of material resources which might be helpful in designing programmes in schools.

In such an underdeveloped framework, the introduction of English as a foreign language seems to be a difficult challenge to put into practice. However, the amount of experience being acquired in different schools tends to confirm how valuable it is for children to be introduced to the foreign language as soon as possible in order to provide for a solid acquisition of the language in the future.

This fact is motivation enough to start a serious research effort in this area. This will mean paying special attention to the needs of the school where the proposal is going to be implemented. It will be necessary to consider aspects such as: fears of the staff, who, either directly or indirectly, will have to cooperate in the development of the project; the response of children and their parents in the face of the introduction of English at a very young age; the day-to-day classroom events; the quality of the results achieved; and the

needs or difficulties which could appear during the development of teaching and learning processes.

### Childhood as the optimal period for foreign language acquisition.

Three-to-eight-year-old students show a very strong need to communicate, and this is the reason why they demonstrate a great interest in any type of verbal and non-verbal language acquisition. At this age, a second- or third-language learning procedure becomes very meaningful to them, as it includes a primary need to communicate, which is precisely the same that happened when they were acquiring their mother tongue(s). Learning a second or third language is part of an educational process of socialization that, nowadays, can be considered the basis of any modern, intercultural educational programme.

With pupils of this age, language plays an educational role, especially when considering the fact that there is an affective and cognitive confrontation with the culture that nourishes it. All the procedures of comparing, contrasting, translating, and identifying fit with the goal of acquiring a new language in harmony with one's own. Little by little, and paying special attention to the cultural behaviour associated with the age of the child, it is possible as well as advisable to train him or her in the comprehension and appreciation of different cultures in order to develop an attitude of fraternity in the child (Titone, 1992).

Moreover, studies by Muñoz (2002) show that children are more open to accepting differences between languages and cultures because the structure of their personality is not as strong as that of adults. It is also important to consider that starting to learn a foreign language as a child is no guarantee of success. One must consider the following factors:

- An intense contact with the foreign language.
- Emphasis has to be put on oral communication.
- The methodology used has to match the maturational age of the child.

That is why it is recommended that a proposal designed by any school ensure the following aspects to guarantee the quality of progress. It should: be the result of a serious research in the area; allow the introduction of English language teaching into *Educació Infantil*; be evaluable in any modest educational context; and ensure English language teaching without having to fall back on classical and formal strategies.

### Drawing up a Proposal

Once the appropriateness of our context (the educational community of Catalonia) and the age of the learners for the introduction of English as a foreign language (3- to 7-year-olds) has been justified through empirical support, it is time to describe all the keys necessary to follow in order to draw up a proposal.

Recovering the aspects that guarantee the quality

of the progress mentioned above, a list of general goals will be created and described on the following pages, along with specific goals deriving from them.

**1. Find available resources which are needed in order to justify introducing English language teaching into *Educació Infantil* or a similar context.**

Any proposal to introduce English into *Educació Infantil* has to be created considering all the aspects mentioned above in order to satisfy a present-day need.

**1.1. Create a precedent in English language teaching to very young learners which might motivate new proposals and research in this area.**

The design, application and evaluation of any proposal should create a precedent in a double sense. On the one hand, it should leave evidence of the existence of a new proposal which guarantees low costs as well as innovation and, on the other hand, it should engage other teachers to create new, similar proposals.

**2. Provide a pedagogical proposal capable of allowing for the introduction of English language teaching into *Educació Infantil*.**

To give shape to a proposal, it is necessary to reach agreements with the educational administration in charge of foreign language introduction at that level and consider the specific needs of the centre as well as those of the teachers in charge of the development, application and evaluation of the proposal.

**2.1. Design a proposal for the introduction of English language teaching into *Educació Infantil* bearing in mind the following criteria: power to motivate, assessability and affordability.**

Offering a motivating and attractive proposal for children must be the main goal for the teacher to achieve. It is important to make sure that English will be a tool that the children will be able to use inside and outside of the classroom in order to express themselves and communicate with others.

There exist many proposals to introduce English into *Educació Infantil* but, in too many cases, these proposals are created in order to satisfy social pressures without much conviction or just to make money easily, more than to guarantee good quality foreign language teaching.

Demonstrating that it is possible to create proposals without the intention of making money or alleviating social pressures has to be one of the main goals for the professionals in this area to achieve.

**2.2. Make English language instruction appealing in areas such as: oral language, musical language, arts and crafts language and foreign language in order to provide a motivating and engaging context for pupils.**

Choosing the area(s) that one expects to teach in English is a very important task. This choice is made considering pupils' and teacher's tastes and needs as well as the characteristics of the different areas.

**2.2.1. Oral language.**

The most valuable tools for providing communication in English in the kindergartens of Primary schools are all of those formulas that are part of the didactic baggage of young children's education: songs, stories, folk games, puppet shows, check the number of students who came today, etc.

The combined use in the classroom of all these resources, added to the natural talkative spontaneity of students aged 3 - 6, makes it possible to develop the process of teaching and learning in English in the kindergarten. The result obtained is a natural, rich speech full of spontaneity and meaning.

**2.2.2. Musical language.**

This discipline guarantees the transmission of cultural knowledge and the development of artistic sensibility. On the other hand, it is also necessary to highlight its communicative and pleasure-generating function that helps to activate the memory of the student.

**2.2.3. Arts & Crafts language.**

It is a very functional and pleasant form of expression that allows the student to know and come closer to the world that surrounds themselves and others. The use of this or other areas of the curriculum to introduce a foreign language in the kindergarten is a very interesting strategy.

**2.2.4. Area of foreign languages (Primary Education).**

Typical routines of school life, storytelling, drama performances, songs, puppet shows, etc., are good examples of activities that will provide the learning of the foreign language in Primary Education.

The instruction of a new phonological system different from one's own, the modulation of the voice, the attitudinal adaptation to the type of message that is being produced, face and body resources, etc., will help the student in the process of translating and producing messages.

**2.3. Promote the development of pupils' language awareness. This development will be broadly stimulated by their particular educational situation: three languages in contact.**

A situation like ours, with three languages in contact with each other (Spanish, Catalan, and English), far from being seen as difficult and counter-productive for children, must be seen as a very stimulating and privileged situation for foreign language acquisition.

From the results obtained after all the research carried out in different educational contexts with more than two languages in contact, the idea that this situation is self-defeating should disappear.

**3. Evaluate the proposal after putting it into practice in a context which shares main aspects**

**with most state schools in the country.**

It is worthwhile to design, apply and evaluate a new proposal in a challenging context. State schools tend to enjoy fewer privileges than other educational settings, that is why it is not being audacious to imagine that a proposal which works in such a context has guarantees to succeed in any other. However, it can never be forgotten that every single state school is particular and unique. This means that any proposal has to be created, applied and evaluated depending on the idiosyncrasy of that specific context.

**3.1. Make sure that all pupils receive a good amount of instruction in English in order to provide meaningful contact with it. It is important to avoid English language teaching being anecdotal instead of creating a situation as similar to real immersion as possible.**

Any proposal has to promote an initial contact with the foreign language. This first contact has to be made considering the following aspects: the amount of exposure to the language that pupils are going to receive, the need to guarantee individual attention to all students and the need to make sure that English will be the only language used in the classroom.

**3.2. Provide the introduction of activities, elements and characters into the development of the sessions which might captivate pupils' attention and interest.**

The application of any proposal has to be made considering students' tastes. This means thinking of innovative activities able to fulfill the expectations of the children in order to please them. In English language teaching to very young learners, surprises and games are the best teacher's supporters. It is necessary to start thinking about new spaces in which to work, such as the canteen, the kitchen, the gym, and the playground. However, teachers must make children aware of how serious and well organized all the activities are, no matter where they are going to take place. Control, order and discipline must never be lost.

**3.3. Create communicative situations in the classroom which will allow pupils to express themselves with freedom, motivating them to interact with each other.**

This goal combines two very important aspects for children to achieve: respect and correct behaviour in learning situations, as well as encouraging them to feel free to express themselves in English.

**4. Warm-up contact of very young learners with English through the use of a specific teaching methodology. This methodology has to be chosen bearing in mind the curricula as well as the idiosyncrasies of 3- to 7- year-old students.**

The fact that the curricula of Young Learner Education is characterised by being flexible and

appropriate for these students' needs makes it ideal when introducing a new innovative element like the introduction of the foreign language.

Time distribution and timetables are the factors that have to be settled in a meticulous way from the beginning, because it will be the established schedule that will allow us to elaborate the third level of concretion with realism and coherence. The making of this schedule has to be carried out paying attention to the school's needs, the teachers' timetables but, above all, considering the need to provide students with frequent instruction in English language.

Experience and common sense tell us that P-3 groups have to be the most spoiled ones when making the schedule of the course. To reserve a daily space; of short length; of a repetitive routinist dynamic; and of great interest for the students because it will be a time for stories, songs, puppets, etc., is considered appropriate for instruction in English language in the classrooms of P-3.

Regarding P-4 and P-5 groups, it is recommended to provide a temporary distribution by workshops. This distribution of pupils in workshops allows teachers to work with reduced groups without making an extraordinary spent of activities because the same weekly programming is good for both groups. As the Catalan Department of Education says:

The amount of time of exposure to the foreign language is very important. However, it is not the only aspect that has to be considered. In this first stage it is necessary to have good classroom programming for all the languages being learned, only one type of methodology, as well as a certain link between all the subjects which are being taught in the other areas (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2004: 9).

#### ***The proposal for P-3: Short sessions.***

It is highly recommended to make sure that these sessions have daily frequency and a length of no more than thirty minutes. A good option to placing these sessions in the school day is the hour after the morning break time. Two main reasons are enough support to encourage teachers to make this choice. On the one hand, in placing English sessions right after the morning break time we ensure that children will be receptive to memorisation activities as they come from the playground. On the other hand, we respect P-3 high-priority activities that students have to carry out with their own tutor. We are talking about routinist activities that have to be carried out during the first and last hour of the morning or the afternoon (morning greetings, taking a seat on the carpet, checking who is in class today, saying the day of the week, looking at the weather, talking about the weekend, commenting on the menu of the day, saying good-bye, etc.).

It will save teacher's time to program these sessions taking the week as a thematic nucleus. If this programming is carried out weekly without caring about monthly distribution, they will guarantee very fle-

xible sessions.

A model of session could be that in which the English teacher arrives in the classroom with a bag or a trolley full of things with which the students are already familiar. The teacher could optionally provide some music when arriving, as it should not be forgotten that a musical accompaniment would always give more solemnity to the arrival and departure. With the arrival, there is no doubt that the teacher will catch the children's attention, as they will show their interest in knowing the contents of the trolley. It is appropriate that, at any time, the adult demonstrates receptiveness to the demands made by the students. For example, if they request the puppet, the teacher has to show it to them in order to avoid disappointing them, and to avoid hindering the speaking process.

Some of the fixed activities in any session should be the introduction of the puppet, the learning or reviewing of some songs, seeing some vocabulary flashcards, storytelling and saying good-bye by means of the puppet. Apart from this, we can add or substitute some of these activities for others such as: video watching, dancing, a puppet show, etc.

Three-year-old students manifest great interest towards learning activities related with young children's literature, songs, dances and children's folk activities in general, the world of puppets, etc., so these elements will be of great interest in the programming. Occasionally, it will be suitable to repeat sessions and even weekly programming throughout the course.

These periodic repetitions will provide the element of routine that will allow the students to know the activities, to catch on early to the aims of the teacher and to participate actively in the development of the class.

#### **The Proposal for P-4 and P-5: English Workshops.**

A good option for teaching English to these students is to follow thematic blocks of varying length.

These thematic blocks can be distributed establishing some series of sessions. The first of them should be the introduction: presentation of the topic, suitable vocabulary introduction, explanation of the consistency of the whole thematic block and some arts and crafts work. Remaining sessions should be meant to provide consolidation of the learning achieved through the first session, as well as previous ones, and to carry out an arts and crafts activity. As Pérea and Roig (2004) say:

*A conception of arts and crafts that goes beyond the mere manipulative activity, more centred on the recognition, identification and creation of forms of expression that take into consideration colour, shapes, textures, composition... would be more enriching for learning English than for aesthetic learning. (Pérez & Roig, 2004: 117)*

The preparation of the first session of the thematic

block demands the effort of the adult to decorate the class with visual stimuli that allows the teacher to make the presentation of the topic to the students without having to appeal to the use of the L1. This presentation will be good for situating the students in the context in which they will have to work during the subsequent sessions of the thematic block.

Once the prolegomena are concluded, it is appropriate to take advantage of the first session to encourage the students to do some artistic work that they will have to continue during the later sessions.

These sessions will begin with a quick review of the vocabulary presented during the first session of the block, and it will be continued with the arts and crafts work.

A resource that favours communication in English in the classroom during the development of the sessions is to provide a store in a corner of the class in order to allow children to buy and sell the material. Students speak in English in the process of exchanging material in the store at the same time that they enjoy playing in this corner.

The use of background music is recommended (English songs already learned or not learned in class) while the arts and crafts activities are carried out in the classroom. Regarding storytelling, it is also worthwhile to think of this as a resource that, occasionally and whenever time allows us, is good for beginning, supplementing or concluding some of these sessions.

The adult, on the other hand, will be in charge of guaranteeing a working environment full of visual stimuli related with the topic being worked on that will facilitate English communication in the classroom (representative images of the new vocabulary, 3D elements equally related with the work topic, a mural that inspires children's arts and crafts work, posters that help them remember the frequent use vocabulary in the classroom, the occasional participation in the classroom of other adults that also speak in English, etc.). The use of relaxing resources (background music made up of English songs) and stimuli (the English language as a tool of communication in the class) that guarantee, insofar as possible, a situation of linguistic immersion in the classroom.

#### **4.1. In the classroom, provide the possibility of involving pupils in communicative situations which might motivate them to use the language for meaningful purposes.**

English becomes a tool of communication between the people concerned in the teaching-learning process instead of being the target.

#### **4.2. Persuade other teachers to follow an ELT style, based on teaching several areas of the curriculum in English instead of teaching English as an isolated subject.**

It is necessary to demonstrate that introducing a foreign language by teaching other areas of the curriculum in that specific language does not require



professionals of the administration concerned, but it does require their support and trust in such an ambitious project.

#### 4.3. Avoid the use of formal strategies in ELT when designing the new proposal.

A new proposal suggests leaving aside traditional methodologies and strategies in order to support new ways of teaching and learning a foreign language.

When teaching a foreign language in kindergartens, it is worthwhile to think about how children learn in this particular context. Role playing corners, workshops, drama performances and folk resources tend to be some of the most suitable strategies for teaching these children. Introducing a foreign language shouldn't mean a change in the use of the resources and activities they are familiar with. That is why teaching them a foreign language through the use of formal strategies such as classical workbooks, handouts and listening and repeating activities might not be the best choice.

#### Conclusion

I hope all the keys described above will motivate teachers to get involved in the creation of new proposals. In my opinion, the key factor which will preside over any proposal is to make sure that children are going to use the foreign language in order to communicate in it, no matter how accurate they are. The teacher has to be an interlocutor and a model, not so much a corrector.

It is appropriate, at any rate, to try to make sure that students' first contact with the language will be attractive and that it will motivate them to produce small, spontaneous, meaningful dialogues. It is worthwhile to avoid activities related with formal teaching of the language and to leave aside traditional methodologies, strategies and techniques in order to support new foreign language teaching and learning styles.

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Resources for Primary School Teachers

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# Teatre Nacional de Catalunya

Temporada 2005|2006



Teatre Nacional de Catalunya

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## Sala Gran

Del 29 de setembre al 23 d'octubre

### El castigo sin venganza

Lope de Vega  
Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico  
Versió i direcció  
Eduardo Vasco

Del 17 de novembre al 22 de gener

### Les falses confidències

Pierre de Marivaux  
Versió i direcció  
Sergi Belbel

Del 26 de gener al 5 de febrer

### Raimon

Quatre recitals diferents

Del 2 de març al 30 d'abril

### Aigües encantades

Joan Puig i Ferrer  
Direcció  
Ramon Simó

Del 9 al 28 de maig

### Serrat

Joan Manuel Serrat

9, 10, 12 i 13 de juny

### Limb's Theorem

Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon  
Coreografia  
William Forsythe

Del 21 al 24 de juny

### The Canterbury Tales

(Els contes de Canterbury)  
Geoffrey Chaucer  
Royal Shakespeare Company

## Sala Petita

Del 13 d'octubre al 4 de desembre

### Salamandra

Josep Maria Benet i Jornet  
Direcció  
Toni Casares

A partir del 20 de desembre

### Les aventures extraordinàries d'en Massagran

Josep Maria Folch i Torres  
Adaptació teatral i direcció  
Joan Castells

Del 2 de febrer al 26 de març

### Panorama des del pont

Arthur Miller  
Traducció de l'anglès  
Joan Sellent  
Direcció  
Rafel Duran

Del 20 d'abril a l'11 de juny

### La fam

Joan Oliver  
Direcció  
Pep Pla

Del 27 de juny al 9 de juliol

### 1995...

Marta Carrasco  
Direcció  
Marta Carrasco

## Sala Tallers

20, 21, 22 i 23 d'octubre

### La Rose et la hache

William Shakespeare / Carmelo Bene  
Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe  
Direcció  
Georges Lavaudant

Del 3 de novembre al 4 de desembre

### Uuuuh!

Gerard Vázquez  
Direcció  
Joan Font

Del 7 al 26 de febrer

### Aurora De Gollada

Beth Escudé i Gallès  
Direcció  
Beth Escudé i Gallès

Del 14 de març al 2 d'abril

### Jo sóc un altre!

Esteve Soler  
Direcció  
Tamzin Townsend

Del 27 d'abril al 7 de maig

### Àvida Vida

Color Dansa  
Direcció artística, direcció i coreografia  
Mudit Grau

Del 18 al 28 de maig

### Testimoni de llops

Mal Pelo  
Direcció, coreografia i interpretació  
Maria Muñoz i Pep Ramis

## APAC amb el Teatre Nacional de Catalunya

Durant la temporada 2005-2006 (Descomptes no aplicables al Nacional Petit), i pels espectadors de teatre de les tres sales, els titulars del carnet de l'APAC podran beneficiar-se dels següents descomptes en l'adquisició de fins a 2 localitats per representació.

**- 15 % tots els espectacles**

### Les localitats es podran adquirir:

- Directament a les taquilles del Teatre prèvia exhibició del carnet de l'APAC.
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Igualment, el TNC podrà sol·licitar en qualsevol moment a la persona que hagi adquirit les entrades per mitjà del carnet de soci o del document acreditatiu com a beneficiari de l'APAC que mostri les seves dades personals que la identifiquin com a beneficiari del carnet abans esmentat.

EL TNC requerirà als associats de l'entitat que exhibeixin el seu carnet per acreditar la seva condició de socis. La programació es pot consultar a la Pàg. Web del TNC

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## FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND THE USE OF READERS

THIS IS AN EXPERIENCE WITH A READING TECHNIQUE USED WHEN WE OFFER STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE ANY READER THEY LIKE, ACCORDING TO A CERTAIN LEVEL.

by Remedios Ruiz

Students can find a good deal of readers from different publishers in the school library, or any other one. At the same time, they take advantage of them (otherwise, why are they there?), they save money and, what is more important, they can choose the title they prefer. (That way we save comments such as "What a boring book this is that we are reading!", while others are quite satisfied with it.)

The tasks are not specific ones, since they must be suitable for any title they may choose. Our aims are to check general reading comprehension, written expression and oral expression, instead of specific reading information or vocabulary on a unique title for everybody. They are mostly intended for Bachillerato students, though some of them can also be used with ESO students.



REMEDIOS RUIZ RUIZ HAS BEEN TEACHING ENGLISH AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR TWENTY-FOUR YEARS, THE LAST SEVENTEEN AT IES GILI I GAYA, IN LLEIDA. SHE HAS COORDINATED SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES AND HAS TAKEN PART IN A FOUR-YEAR COMENIUS PROGRAMME WITH SECONDARY SCHOOLS FROM OTHER FOUR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. SHE HAS OFTEN ATTENDED JORNADES AND CONVENTIONS, HAS SOMETIMES CONTRIBUTED SOME ARTICLES AND SHE ALSO GAVE A WORKSHOP AT AN APAC CONVENTION SEVERAL YEARS AGO. SHE SOMETIMES COLLABORATES WITH BURLINGTON REVIEWING TEACHING MATERIALS FOR ESO AND BACHILLERATO TEXTBOOKS.

READING AND WRITING ABOUT DIFFERENT READERS

First of all, we provide students with a guide of the level/stage they should choose from:

READER LEVELS

ES01: ± 400 words

- Longman Original Stage 1
- Oxford Bookworms Black Series Stage 1
- Burlington Readers Series. 1º ESO
- Hotshot Puzzles Levels 1 - 4 (200 - 500 headwords)
- Richmond Readers Level Starter / 1
- Penguin Readers Easy Starts / Level 1
- Heinemann Starter

ES02: ± 700 words

- Burlington Readers Series. 2º ESO
- Longman Originals Stage 2
- Longman Classics Stage 1
- Oxford Bookworms Black & Green Series Stage 2
- Richmond Readers Level 1 / 2
- Penguin Readers Level 2
- Heinemann Starter / Beginner

ES03: ± 1,000 words

- Longman Originals Stage 3
- Longman Classics Stage 2
- Oxford Bookworms Black & Green Series Stage 3
- Burlington Reader Series 3º E.S.O.
- Richmond Readers Level 2 / 3
- Collins Level 1
- Heinemann Beginner / Elementary

ES04: ± 1,400 words

- Longman Originals Stage 4
- Longman Classics Stage 3
- Longman Fiction Lower Intermediate
- Oxford Bookworms Black & Green Series Stage 4
- Oxford Progressive English Readers Grade 1
- Burlington Reader Series 4º E.S.O.
- Richmond Readers Level 3
- Penguin Readers Level 3
- Collins Level 2
- Heinemann Elementary / Intermediate

Bach.1: ± 1,800 words

- Longman Fiction Intermediate
- Longman Classics Stage 4
- Oxford Bookworms Black Series Stage 5
- Oxford Progressive English Readers Grade 2
- Burlington Reader Series 1º Bachillerato
- Richmond Readers Starter Level 4
- Collins Level 3 / 4
- Penguin Readers Level 4
- Heinemann Intermediate / Upper

Bach.2: ± 2,500 words

- Longman Fiction Simplified Edition / Upper Intermediate / Advanced
- Longman Classics Stage 5
- Oxford Bookworms Black Series Stage 6
- Oxford Progressive English Readers Grades 2 - 5
- Burlington Reader Series 2º Bachillerato
- Collins Level 4 / 5
- Penguin Readers Level 5 / 6
- Heinemann Upper

After students have chosen the one they like best, usually from the school library, although they can also buy it if they prefer, we give them the following task:

BOOK REPORT

**Title:**

**Author:**

**Publisher:**

**Level / Stage:**

1. What is the book about? Write a *brief* summary.
2. Who are the main characters? Describe one of them and provide quotations supporting your statements.
3. Where and when does the story take place?
4. What did you like best? Write your comments and opinion about the book.
5. Choose about three sentences from the book showing the use of each of the grammatical structures below. (We can decide on the most convenient grammar points for reviewing our syllabus.)

- The gerund
- The infinitive (Verb + object + to infinitive)
- Modal Verbs
  - Advice
  - Obligation or necessity in the present / the past
  - Possibility in the present / the past
  - Permission in the present / the past
  - Ability in the present / the past
  - Deduction or certainty in the present / the past

- Relative Clauses
- Conditional clauses
- Subordinate clauses : time, cause, contrast, result, purpose, ...
- Indirect statements
- Indirect questions
- Phrasal verbs
- Adjectives + Preposition
- Verbs + Preposition

6. Choose one of the options below and write a composition of about 100 words related to the content of your book. (We can decide on the most convenient format to practise at a given moment.)

Option 1. Write a narrative. Choose a part of the book you particularly liked and say what happened in it and why you liked it.

Option 2. Write an informal letter to one of the characters in the book commenting on his or her situation.

Option 3. Write a conversation between two characters in the book, describing or commenting on something that happened in the story.

Option 4. Describe one or two main characters in the story and the part he/she plays in it.

Option 5. Write a formal letter to the book's author advising him/her on some changes in the story.

Option 6. Write a for-and-against composition about some matter of importance in the story.

We also advise students to **make a plan** of the ideas they want to include, **to use well-structured paragraphs**, and to be careful with some common errors such as:

- for to win (**to win / in order to win**)
- they must had walked (**they must walk / they must have walked**)
- people is/ has/ was (**people are/ have / were**)
- it don't goes / it didn't broke (**it doesn't go / it didn't break**)
- they have working here during two years (**they have worked / have been working** here for two years)
- a girl who has 12 years (**a girl who is** 12 years old)
- two different things (two **different** things)
- very policemen / students (**many / a lot of / lots of policemen**)
- she is worried for pass her exam (she is **worried about** her exam/ **passing** her exam)
- I'm not agree (**I don't agree**)
- more good / bad that (**better / worse than**)
- this difficulties / another difficulties (**this difficulty / another difficulty / these difficulties/ other difficulties**)

- the room have (the room **has**)
- the importance of this game it's (the importance ... **is**)
- when we arrived there, started to rain (when we..., **it started...**)
- the man who he is my neighbour (the man **who is** ...)
- the place that he was born (the place **where/ in which he** ...)
- how everybody know (**as** everybody **knows**)
- parents want that their children behave properly (parents **want their children to behave...**)
- he suggested to go (he suggested **going / that we should go / that she go**)
- I would like very much to meet you (I would like to meet you very much)
- If she had studied harder, she would pass her test (...**she would have passed ...**)
- If she studied harder, she will pass (... **she would pass** ...)

#### TALKING ABOUT DIFFERENT READERS

After every student has read the Reader he/she chose and has done the tasks above, they are asked to do some other activities, now **speaking activities**, so as to share information about what each one has been reading.

1.- Firstly, we provide them with a list of all the titles chosen. It can include information such as author, time and place of the action.

2.- Each student gives an oral presentation on the plot of his/her Reader.

The others must listen and decide which title matches it. They can prepare copies of some illustration in the Reader and give information about any key situation.

3.- We tell students to classify Readers according to their theme or motif, if the story has primarily to do with, for example, love and marriage, or crime, etc.

4.- We can ask students to try to classify characters according to a number of category headings such as characteristics, qualities or traits. We must prepare a grid for every student. It should contain adjectives or expressions describing people written down the side of it and blank spaces for them to write the names of four characters along the top of it. They must put a cross in the box if they feel the character possesses the quality to any degree. Then in groups of three or four they can comment on their choice and make groups of characters sharing the same attributes.

Characteristic/ Quality/Trait				
Brave				
Generous				
Honest				
Dishonest				
Intelligent				
Polite				
Rude				
Talented				
Emotional				
Wise				
Innocent				
Guilty				
Trustworthy				
Arrogant				
Shy				
Strict				
Strong				
Foolish				
Possessive				
Sociable				
Clumsy				
Modest				
Rich				
Self-centred				
Politically Important				
Smartly Dressed				

5.- We tell students they have to persuade others to read their book by using convincing arguments. That way, we fulfil the literary aim of critical appraisal and recommendation to others.

*so, do your best. We should include those words or expressions found in the titles chosen by the students. Thus, they will depend on their choice but could be something like:*

6.- Then we ask for their opinion about the best or the most interesting Reader. The feedback can help us to plan and select material more appropriate for their interests and personalities.

Brave new world; a foreigner in New York; The client; the full monty; love actually; 1984; the body; mystery and imagination; cold mountain; taste; talented Mr \_\_\_; man from the south; a room with a view; the woman in white; misery; pride and prejudice; prisoner; round the world; twelfth night; far from the madding crowd; dream of; the garden party; great expectations; heat and dust; this rough magic; wuthering heights; cold comfort; cry freedom; decline far from the madding crowd; dream of; the garden party; great expectations; heat and dust; this rough magic; wuthering heights; cold comfort; cry freedom; decline and fall; Jane Eyre; Washington Square; Moonstone; growing pains; night without end, Jane Eyre; Washington Square; Moonstone; growing pains; night without end

7.- Afterwards, we provide them with words selected from the title of their Readers (or the list of titles provided at the beginning of the speaking activities) and ask them to make up a song following any music they like. Then, they are asked to act it out / sing it in front of the whole class.

*Example: Use the necessary words or expressions below to compose a song and give it a title. Prepare it well since next you will have to perform it in front of your partners. It can be funny,*

8.- Students can also be asked to make a Reader come to life by performing it. That way, we cover the literary aim of imaginative interpretation. It might be done in the case that some students happen to choose the same title.

9.- If interest in the plot and theme of a Reader are relatively high, students can be stimulated to shift perspective and transpose the story to a time, place, or culture completely different from those found in the Reader.

The literary aim will be that of extension of theme and plot .

10.- Students could also be asked to design another oral presentation, now dealing with the story from a different frame such as: a medical report, a psychological report on a character, a policemen and detectives' report, a journalistic report, an advertising or publicity report, etc.

11.- They can prepare a visual record in the form of a map or chart of the Reader. Many stories lend themselves to this diagrammatic treatment. *Around the World in Eighty Days*, for instance, could be summarised on a large map of the world. That way students would practise selecting, ordering and interpreting key events.

12.- Finally, they can be asked to prepare an oral recording of a significant, interesting, amusing, ... part of their reader.

By using these or similar tasks, something which started as an individual and particular activity ends up becoming a collective one.



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## Resources to improve oral production

by Ana Yagüe

As we are all aware, oral production is usually the touchstone of our job as teachers of English. A number of school reports on the level of Catalan students stress the fact that, after many years of learning the language, most of them are barely able to communicate in the target language.

Of course, one of the factors that we should take into account is that the number of students per class is an obstacle that the teacher has to overcome in order to empower the actual use of the language in the classroom.

But we sometimes fail to realize that the frequent use of techniques like pair work or small-group work would allow students to be producing oral English for most of the class time.

With a bit of imagination, any activity that we do in class can be used to stimulate oral production.

Specific grammar points, for example, can be practised aloud in pairs, as long as we create an information gap where one of the students has the key and can give feedback to the others. At the same time, we should make the exercise meaningful, in a way that students are really communicating because we are giving them a reason to listen to each other.

The same can be said of reading texts, which could be worked on in small groups allowing for oral practice all the way through. Jigsaw reading, for example, when each student has a text, or a different part of the same text, and they have to put together the information in order to complete

a task, is something that always works well with any number of students.

In the same way, vocabulary exercises can be made communicative by drawing up two sets of questions which contain the target vocabulary, including some explanations or translations if necessary. Then students are learning the vocabulary by using it in a meaningful way.

Nowadays most text books use and abuse of gap-filling. I think we should try to devise ways to avoid turning our classes into an endless fill-in-the-blanks, which never gives our students a real opportunity to talk. Think that any gap-filling exercise can be re-invented as an oral pair work and made as communicative as possible.

If we want to improve oral production one basic principle should be to maximize students' talking time and drastically reduce our own talking time. After all it's them who are in need for more practice!

The Internet can be a great resource to help us in order to design activities that focus on oral production and communication.

In our web [www.apac.es](http://www.apac.es) we have opened a new section in 'Interesting Links' called 'Oral English', where you will find scores of links with amazing ideas for your classes.

These are some of the links that you will find at <http://iteslj.org/Lessons/> and also in our web <http://www.apac.es>

ANA YAGÜE IS AT PRESENT A TEACHER AT THE EOI OF GIRONA. SHE HOLDS A POSTGRADUATE DEGREE IN DESIGN OF MULTIMEDIA AND SHE HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN DIFFERENT PROJECTS TO PRODUCE INTERACTIVE MATERIALS FOR SOME PUBLISHERS AND ALSO FOR THE UOC. SHE IS ALSO INTERESTED IN THE USES OF THE INTERNET AND THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AT ALL LEVELS.



# LA REFLEXIÓ SOBRE LA LLENGUA I LA COMUNICACIÓ EN L'APRENTATGE DE LLENGÜES

## X JORNADES DE LLENGÜES ESTRANGERES

LLEIDA 27-29 març 2003

by C. Escobar, J.M. Cots, O. Esteve, M. Irun i D. Masats

### Participants:

Josep Maria Cots (*Universitat de Lleida*), Olga Esteve (*Universitat Pompeu Fabra*),  
Montse Irun (*Universitat de Lleida i professora de l'IES Joan Oroó*)  
i Dolors Masats (*Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*).  
i Montse Irun (*Universitat de Lleida i professora de l'IES Joan Oro*)

### Moderadora:

Cristina Escobar (*Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*)

Aquestes línies recullen les aportacions vessades pels del participants a la taula rodona "Reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació en l'aprenentatge de llengües" (Lleida, 2003)<sup>1</sup> i que vaig tenir el plaer de moderar.

El paper que juga té en l'adquisició de llengües la presa de consciència per part dels aprenents sobre els fenòmens lingüístics i comunicatius ha estat amplament debatut en durant les darreres quatre dècades. El tema s'ha abordat des de perspectives ben diferents. Una repassada revisió superficial de textos escrits, conferències i tallers de formació del professorat dels últims 25 anys posa de manifest posicions radicalment discrepants d'acadèmics i didactes docents que van des dels possibles beneficis ("sense ensenyament explícit de la gramàtica no hi ha aprenentatge efectiu"), fins als perjudicis ("l'aprenentatge conscient de les regles gramaticals pot, fins i tot, entorpir el progrés de l'aprenent") passant per la suposada inutilitat de les activitats relacionades amb les formes ("l'única utilitat d'una explicació gramatical rau el en l'exercici de comprensió auditiva que els aprenents efectuen"). Sovint, aquestes posicions han estat més basades en les concepcions prèvies de les persones que les formulaven que en observacions acurades dels processos d'apropiació de les llengües encetats pels

aprenents. També és relativament senzill -i força il·luminador- rastrejar l'evolució que els termes "consciència lingüística" "aprenentatge conscient/inconscient", "reflexió metalingüística", "atenció a les formes" o altres termes relacionats han anat adoptant al llarg dels anys.

Actualment, a la llum dels resultats de recerques de tota mena, ningú no negaria la importància de la reflexió en els processos d'aprenentatge de llengües. El professorat, amb un cert escepticisme, es pregunta, però, si no ens trobem, de fet, en un moment de tornada a l'ensenyament gramatical de tota la vida sota l'aparença d'un nom que "fa bonic". Una resposta negativa a aquesta neguit pregunta comporta d'immediat tot un seguit de preguntes per part del professorat, com ara "Quines són les diferències essencials entre el vell ensenyament de tipus gramaticista i els nous plantejaments que reclamen la presa de consciència per part dels aprenents?" o bé "Quines estratègies d'ensenyament poden contribuir a propiciar una reflexió de qualitat a l'aula?".

Els quatre participants en la taula rodona, docents i investigadors en l'àmbit de les llengües, professionals que han aprofundit en aquestes qüestions<sup>1</sup>, van intentar respondre a aquestes i d'altres preguntes formulades des de la mateixa taula i des

1.- Part dels resultats dels seus treballs es troben reunits en el volum "Pensar lo dicho. La reflexión sobre la lengua y la comunicación en el aprendizaje de lenguas". Lleida, 2002. Ed. Milenium, un recull d'articles sobre el tema coordinat pels professors J.m. Cots i L. Nussbaum.

de l'audiència. Les seves contribucions es presenten a continuació, en format de pregunta-resposta. Tots els participants donen, en primer lloc, la seva visió sobre el paper de la reflexió a en l'aprenentatge de llengües, per a després abordar aspectes més específics de les seves pròpies línies de treball.

**MONTSE IRUN (M.I.)** ha treballat en la introducció d'activitats de reflexió per a l'ensenyament de l'anglès a les aules de secundària dins un marc d'ensenyament comunicatiu. La professora Irun rebutja la identificació entre programes gramaticals tradicionals i ensenyament comunicatiu amb atenció a les formes.

*CRISTINA ESCOBAR (C.E.): Quin és el lloc de la reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació en els enfocaments comunicatius?*

M.I.: Els enfocaments comunicatius i, més concretament, l'enfocament basat en tasques prioritzen el significat, l'exposició a l'*input* comprensible i la producció de missatges autèntics per sobre de la forma en la que es materialitza aquest significat. Però, en tant que considerem que adonar-se (*noticing*) de com es construeix el missatge és essencial per a què allò que l'aprenent rep, l'*input*, o *input* pugui ser integrat, es és a dir, es converteixi en *intake*, donant lloc a l'adquisició, cal aconseguir que l'aprenent esdevingui conscient sobre d'aspectes concrets de la comunicació i de la llengua.

Encara que pot semblar una contradicció, no ho és.

*C.E.: És possible articular les activitats comunicatives i de reflexió de manera de forma que l'encaix no grinyoli?*

M.I.: Sí, perquè la reflexió s'integra dins de la tasca i la reflexió es desencadena quan és realment necessària per desenvolupar el producte final. Quan els aprenents volen aconseguir transmetre un missatge i no tenen les estructures o el lèxic necessari per fer-ho eficaçment, surt la necessitat d'estudiar com funciona aquell aspecte lingüístic concret o com es comunica expressa aquella certa determinada funció comunicativa. Es llavors que els s'han de posar al seu abast dels aprenents les activitats de reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació. La reflexió té llocés, doncs, d'una manera *ad hoc*, dins d'un context concret i sense perdre de vista la funció comunicativa del llenguatge.

*C.E.: Quines característiques haurien de tenir les activitats de reflexió que proposes?*

M.I.: En primer lloc, aquestes activitats han de ser contextualitzades. El context vindrà donat per la pròpia tasca i com a resultat de la pròpia inquietud

dels aprenents per expressar el missatge de la millor manera possible. En segon lloc, les activitats haurien de basar-se en el descobriment tant de l'estructura com de l'ús de les formes lingüístiques. Els alumnes esdevenen investigadors d'elements lingüístics i s'esforcen en descobrir aquells que els ajudaran a expressar els seus significats de la forma més precisa i eficient possible. Sovint, són els mateixos alumnes els que, autònomament o amb l'ajut del professor, utilitzen totes les eines a l'abast per "resoldre" aquell "problema" lingüístic o comunicatiu que els ha sorgit. És evident que aquesta pràctica està molt allunyada del mètode gramàtica-traducció en el qual els significats i les activitats sobre les formes gramaticals sempre venen determinades pel docent, i no per les necessitats expressives dels aprenents.

**OLGA ESTEVE (O.E.)**, juntament amb l'equip format per J. Borrás, E. Naval-Surribas i L. Vilaseca, han elaborat propostes destinades a l'aprenentatge de l'alemany. La seva proposta no perd mai de vista les característiques del perfil d'aprenent al qual s'adreça els seus destinataris: adults amb coneixements, capacitats i expectatives ben diferenciades de les d'altres col·lectius com ara els infants o adolescents.

*C.E.: Quin és el lloc de la reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació en els enfocaments comunicatius?*

O.E.: Nosaltres també partim del principi bàsic que, en l'aprenentatge de llengües estrangeres, és necessària dur a terme una reflexió més conscient sobre la llengua i la seva comunicació, sempre mirant cap a l'objectiu primer i últim de l'ensenyament-aprenentatge de llengües: el de poder-se comunicar amb els altres.

*C.E.: De quina manera es pot articular la reflexió quan els destinataris aprenents són un col·lectiu d'adults completament alfabetitzats en, com a mínim, una llengua?*

O.E.: D'entrada, nosaltres intentem concretar una mica l'objectiu de la reflexió. La pregunta de partida que ens plantejem és la següent: Com podem explotar l'alt potencial de coneixements previs dels aprenents adults ja alfabetitzats per tal d'ajudar-los a entendre el funcionament comunicatiu de la nova llengua. Per tal de trobar estratègies de reflexió útils pels adults partim dels resultats de les recerques més actuals en l'àmbit d'adquisició-aprenentatge de segones llengües. Segons aquests estudis, l'aprenent adult posseeix en el seu coneixement implícit (intuïtiu o inconscient) un esquema mental del que són tipus de textos i gèneres textuals. És a dir, si un adult sent la paraula "recepta" immediatament es posen en marxa en la seva ment un seguit de con-

nexions que el porta a relacionar aquest gènere textual amb situacions de la seva vida quotidiana. D'aquesta manera, acaba associant "recepta" amb dos tipus de text concrets: la recepta de cuina i la recepta del metge.

*C.E.: Com vàreu concretar la proposta?*

O.E.: Cada tipus de text ens oferia una unitat global i integradora des de la qual poder endegar una reflexió sobre la llengua en tots els nivells lingüístics: des del textual i discursiu (la disposició de la informació és fa d'una manera determinada en cada gènere textual) fins al morfosintàctic (cada gènere textual posseeix unes característiques morfosintàctiques determinades) passant pel semàntic (vocabulari més o menys específic de cada gènere) i el pragmàtic (formalitat del discurs, tipus de discurs, etc.). El fet de partir del "gènere textual" ens obria, doncs, una porta per treballar a fons tots els aspectes esmentats, sempre a partir d'un fil comunicatiu conductor: el que ofereix el text en cada gènere textual (cada gènere persegueix un objectiu comunicatiu). A més, ens ajudava a establir connexions entre la L1 i la llengua estrangera des d'una perspectiva contrastiva i funcional, ja que entenem que (el text sempre està al servei de la comunicació i posseeix una funció comunicativa): "Com s'expressa això o allò altre en una recepta en la vostra llengua materna?" "Mireu si en el text alemany també s'expressa això més o menys de la mateixa manera" "Quines diferències o similituds hi veieu?"

L'experiència ens demostra que els alumnes, de fet, ja fan servir aquesta "estratègia" comparativa per entendre i produir textos en la llengua estrangera. Per què no potenciar-la més en totes les seves possibilitats?

**DOLORS MASATS (D.M.)** col·labora en el projecte europeu JaLing, adreçat principalment a escolars de primària tot i que també contempla propostes per al segon cicle d'educació infantil i per a l'etapa primer cicle de secundària obligatòria.

*C.E.: Quin és el lloc de la reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació en els enfocaments comunicatius?*

D.M.: La reflexió no mai hauria d'estar mai absent de les aules de qualsevol matèria escolar. El repte rau en el repte de ser capaços de dissenyar tasques i materials que propicien promoguin una reflexió de qualitat. En el cas de la reflexió sobre les llengües aquest repte esdevé encara més urgent quan els aprenents són infants o joves que viuen en una societat cada cop més multilingüe i més multicultural. El projecte europeu JaLing treballa en aquesta direcció i defensa que aquesta reflexió s'ha de portar a terme a través d'un enfocament integrat de

l'ensenyament de llengües que tampoc no s'hauria de restringir a les classes de llengua.

*C.E.: Explica'ns de quina manera JaLing afronta aquest repte.*

D.M.: JaLing (-*Janua Linguarum Reserata*, és a dir, =*La porta oberta a les llengües*)- dissenya tasques i materials per promoure l'ensenyament de les llengües de l'escola a través de la reflexió sobre com s'aprèn i el reconeixement i acceptació de la diversitat lingüística i cultural present a l'escola i a la societat, a més, ajuda als professors a portar-los a l'aula, i avalua els resultats.

*C.E.: Quins serien els trets diferencials d'aquests materials?*

D.M.: Les tasques i materials estan dissenyats partint de la premissa que si es potencien els continguts actitudinals per damunt dels continguts conceptuals, es poden promoure actituds favorables vers l'aprenentatge de llengües i vers les llengües. Així, potser deixaríem de sentir frases com "A mi no m'agrada el castellà", "Jo només parlo català a classe perquè m'hi obliguen", "Per què haig d'aprendre anglès si mai no aniré a Anglaterra", "No entenc el francès perquè no l'he estudiat mai", "Aquella parla una llengua rara", etc. Ara bé, aquesta actitud positiva vers les llengües del món només pot afavorir l'aprenentatge de les llengües objectes d'estudi a l'escola si es plantegen activitats que també treballin continguts procedimentals i que, per tant, ajudin als alumnes a desenvolupar tant aptituds i habilitats cognitives (per exemple, -com ara la inducció (de significats i regles), la formulació d'hipòtesis i la resolució de problemes),- com habilitats lingüístiques relacionades amb la discriminació de sons i la comprensió global de missatges. Per aconseguir aquest objectiu, els materials s'han dissenyat prenent com a referència les aportacions dels plantejaments socioconstructivistes.

*C.E.: Es podria dir que JaLing és, de fet, un nou mètode per a aprendre llengües?*

D.M.: De cap manera. Ara bé, els materials de JaLing si han estat elaborats com a seqüències didàctiques amb un ordre o patró sistemàtic estructurat en tres fases. De tota manera, el tret més diferencial de la forma de treballar amb materials de JaLing és el canvi que experimenta el rol del professor.

*C.E.: Quines són aquestes fases i com actua el professor a en cadascuna d'elles?*

D.M.: A la fase inicial, el docent deixa de ser un transmissor de coneixements per convertir-se en un gestor de la comunicació a l'aula que haurà de promoure la reflexió sobre els temes que es tractaran

en a cada seqüència didàctica. A la fase d'experimentació haurà d'ajudar als seus alumnes a desenvolupar estratègies cognitives que els permetin resoldre els problemes lingüístics que se'ls plantejgin i a la fase de síntesi i d'avaluació haurà de reelaborar les aportacions fetes pels alumnes, i finalment, a la fase d'avaluació, ajudar-los a valorar la proposta per tal de donar sentit a tota la seqüència i evitar que la feina duta a terme es pugui veure exclusivament com una simple activitat lúdica.

Les propostes del professor JOSEP MARIA COTS (J.M.C.) introdueixen, dins del treball cooperatiu per tasques, la reflexió sobre un objecte rarament abordat a les classes de llengua estrangera: l'element sociocultural, i ho fa des de la perspectiva de l'Anàlisi Crítica del Discurs (ACD), un enfocament crític sobre l'ús lingüístic com a vehicle de transmissió, manipulació i resistència ideològica.

*C.E.: Quin és el lloc de la reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació en els enfocaments comunicatius?*

J.M.C.: Davant del perill que la incorporació de la reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació suposi un retorn al mètode gramatical, crec que cal desenvolupar materials en els que quals es posi l'èmfasi d'una manera clara tant en les formes com en els objectes de reflexió. És a dir, es tracta, no només de proposar elements per a analitzar i practicar l'ús lingüístic, sinó també de plantejar unes maneres d'aprendre en les que l'alumne sigui cada vegada més autònom i crític sobre ell/a mateix/a i el seu entorn.

*C.E. Quins objectes de reflexió s'haurien de prioritzar?*

J.M.C.: En primer lloc cal dir que la capacitat de reflexionar dels alumnes no s'ha de limitar a la gramàtica, sinó que ha d'incloure altres aspectes de l'ús lingüístic com la pronúncia, el discurs o els valors socioculturals, entre d'altres. McCarthy i Carter (1994) proposen tres "paràmetres" per a la reflexió: la forma (la llengua com a sistema), la funció (la llengua com a instrument del l'individu per actuar) i el significat sociocultural (la llengua com a portadora i creadora de significats socials i culturals).

*C.E. I quant a les formes?*

J.M.C.: Pel que fa a les formes per dur a terme la reflexió, s'ha de tenir en compte que el fet mateix d'introduir la reflexió a l'aula implica que creiem en la capacitat de l'alumne de considerar la realitat detingudament i aprofundir-hi. El foment de la reflexió, tal i com s'hauria d'entendre actualment, s'hauria de basar en un model d'aprenentatge autònom,

segons el qual els docents hem **d'ensenyar a aprendre**. Segons van Lier (1996), aquest model té quatre pilars: (a) aprenentatge cooperatiu, (b) aprenentatge autònom (que no implica necessàriament treball individual, sinó treball com a resultat d'escollir i d'assumir responsabilitats), (c) consciència sobre el propi d'aprenentatge, (d) capacitat dels alumnes d'articular llurs necessitats i objectius. En darrer lloc, aquesta reflexió ha de superar el dualisme entre allò que és conscient i allò que és subconscient, integrant la reflexió dins d'activitats de comunicació.

*C.E.: Podria donar-se el cas que aquestes demandes de reflexió suposessin un repte només a l'abast d'alumnes amb un perfil acadèmic determinat? Per exemple, dels bons coneixedors de la terminologia gramatical?*

J.M.C.: La reflexió sobre la llengua i la comunicació basada en els paràmetres exposats anteriorment no requereix que els alumnes dominin un sofisticat metallenguatge; és tracta, més aviat, d'aprofitar i anar polint progressivament les intuïcions sobre l'ús lingüístic que ja tenen de gràcies a la seva experiència personal com a parlants.

*C.E.: El professorat estem força familiaritzats amb l'anàlisi gramatical. Ara bé quan es tracta de reflexionar sobre el discurs ens manquen models d'anàlisi. Ens podries explicar quins són els fonaments de l'Anàlisi Crítica del Discurs?*

J.M.C.: Molts dels textos amb els quals treballem a l'aula ens serveixen única i exclusivament per exemplificar l'ús d'estructures gramaticals o de vocabulari. Rarament, però, ens plantegem treballar el text com un procés de producció i recepció en el que hi participen un o més individus, amb una finalitat social determinada i que té lloc en unes circumstàncies temporals, espacials i socials concretes. La incorporació de l'Anàlisi Crítica del Discurs en l'ensenyament d'una llengua suposa presentar l'ús lingüístic com el resultat de tres tipus de pràctica: social, discursiva i textual.

En el nivell de pràctica social, l'objectiu és descobrir en quina mida mesura allò que diuen els individus en una situació concreta està relacionat amb l'estructura social i la naturalesa de l'activitat socialsocial en la que es produeix i que representa participen.

La pràctica discursiva està relacionada amb l'especificitat de la situació concreta de comunicació, i pren en consideració els aspectes materials i cognitius relacionats amb les condicions en las quals es produeix i interpreta el text (per exemple, el medi de comunicació, el coneixement previ entre els participants, les circumstàncies espacials i temporals, etc.).

Finalment, en el nivell de pràctica textual, ens centrem en les característiques formals i semàntiques del text (com ara la gramàtica i el vocabulari) que

contribueixen d'una forma destacada a transmetre i interpretar un missatge específic.

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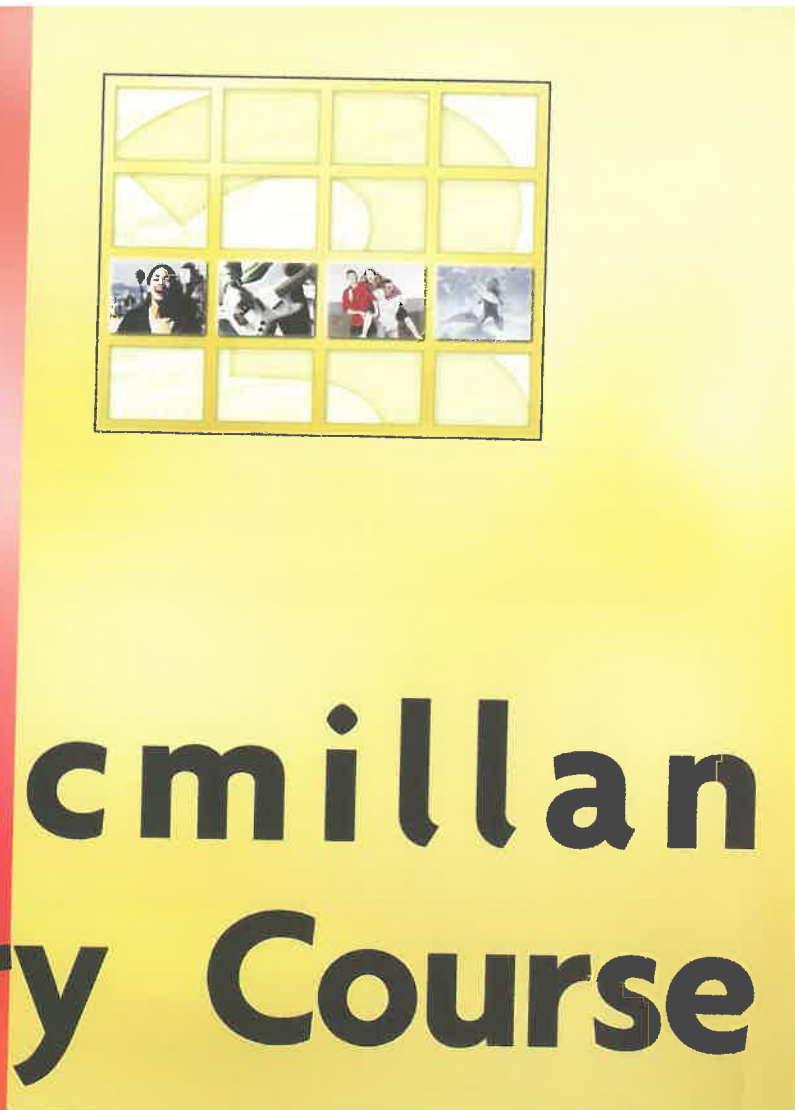
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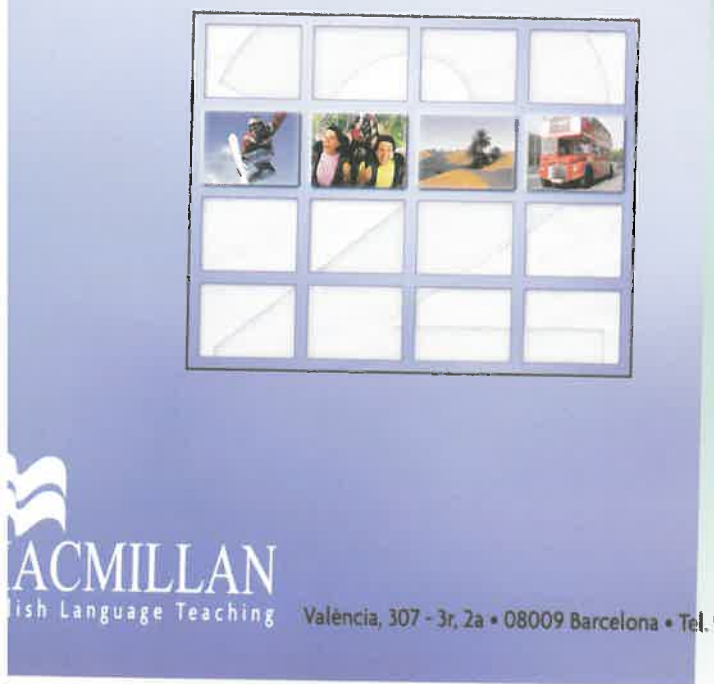
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